

Connecticut Guardian

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Governor Rell delivers State of the State address

NGACT hosts Legislative breakfast

SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE PA NCO

Just nine days after breast cancer surgery, Gov. M. Jodi Rell delivered her first State of the State address before a packed House chamber at the state capitol in Hartford.

Waving and smiling as she was introduced, Rell was visibly moved by the warm reception she received from the state representatives, senators, commissioners, staff and invited guests that had gathered for the opening day of the 2005 Connecticut General Assembly Session.

"Stop. Please stop," she said as those gathered continued to applaud and cheer for their leader. Once they had stopped, Rell began her address by acknowledging her brush with mortality.

"Before I begin my formal remarks, let



Governor M. Jodi Rell waves to the Connecticut General Assembly and gathered guests in appreciation for her warm welcome before delivering her first State of the State Address. (Photo by Spc. Jesse J. Stanley Jr, 65th PCH)

me take a moment to thank everyone for their well wishes and their prayers over the last 10 days," said Rell. "Your outpouring of kindness has meant more to me than you will ever know. It has brought me strength and resolve in my recovery. It has touched my heart. Thank you."

Then she got down to the business at hand, and firmly proclaimed that the state of the state was strong and growing stronger every day.

"We have been sorely tested over the last 12 months," said Rell. "We witnessed countless revelations of corruption and breach of the public trust. We undertook an historic impeachment inquiry. We saw indictments handed out and plea bargains reached.

"We sent our sons and daughters off to war, and welcomed far to many of them home with tears after they paid the ultimate price for protecting our freedoms," the governor told those gathered. Yes, it has been a difficult year for Connecticut, in so many ways. We have been tested and we have been tried, but we have prevailed."

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Soldiers pay tribute to fellow comrade

Fallen Soldier said to be specialist in rank, general in courage

STAFF SGT. REBEKAH-MAE N. BRUNS
39th BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM PUBLIC AFFAIRS

"I love you guys," said the wounded Spc. Robert Hoyt, 21, of Storrs, Conn., to his platoon as they placed him on a helicopter for evacuation.

"We love you too," said platoon leader David Dixon.

They were the last words his platoon would hear from him and the last time they would ever see him.

Hoyt later died of wounds from a roadside bomb that threw him from his vehicle while on an escort mission on the outskirts of Taji.

At his memorial service, Soldiers filled out the lined rows of chairs falling in rank for the final goodbye they had been unable to give.

"Spc. Hoyt was never a person of many words," said 1st Lt. Rick Marshall, of Vernon, Conn., with straining emotion. "But if it is true that actions speak louder than words, then Spc. Hoyt's actions were like thunder claps across the sky."

When Connecticut's 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry received its assignment for Iraq last December it was only for a platoon size element to help fill out Arkansas' Troop E, 151st Cavalry of the 39th Brigade Combat Team. But Hoyt raised his hand for the assignment saying, "I'll go." He volunteered to leave behind his family and all that was home for a desert war in support of his country.

"Spc. Hoyt's actions spoke volumes for his character," said Marshall. "That was the type of man he was."



Newington police officer, retired Guardsman killed in line of duty



SPC. JORDAN WERME
65th PCH

On Dec. 30 Master Police Officer Peter J. Lavery, 47, of the Newington Police Department, was shot and killed in the line of duty.

Lavery had been with the N.P.D. for 17 years and had served a total of 20 years of police service. Lavery had received multiple commendations for outstanding service while a member of both the Berlin and Newington police departments.

During a long career in public service, Lavery served as a member of the Connecticut Army National Guard, earning an honorable discharge from military service in July 2001.

Among Maj. Lavery's assignments were infantry platoon leader, infantry company commander, and senior teaching,

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Up Front with the Adjutant General

The New Year Ahead

First I would like to wish each and every one of you a Happy and Healthy New Year. As we ring in the New Year let me reassure you that our mission is not yet complete. President Bush said that our Nation faced a crossroads of radicalism and technology and that our enemies have openly declared that they were seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicated that they are doing so with determination. He said the United States would not allow these efforts to succeed.

“History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.”

At the time it was a year after the tragedies of Sept. 11 and Operation Iraqi Freedom was still in the planning phases.

Today we remain engaged and fully committed to the same cause. The capture of Saddam Hussein and the preparation for this month’s Iraqi elections has only strengthened the commitment and dedication to the Global War on Terrorism.

Today, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate each and every one of you for your dedicated and selfless commitment to the Connecticut National Guard, the Nation, and our great State. It is an honor you have earned throughout these trying times for your volunteer service as Citizen Soldiers and Airmen. It is an honor to serve as your adjutant general. I am extremely proud of

the sacrifices you make to the organization each day.

Common tasks and basic Soldier skills are still the core to survival on the battlefield and remain the number one responsibility of today’s leadership. Leaders at all levels of command need to remain focused on maintaining an appropriate level of readiness. I can’t over emphasizing the importance of leadership to prioritize training at the soldier level. To date our commitment to squad level basic skills training has been the key to success.

I had the opportunity to meet with the Executive Board of the National Guard Association of Connecticut (NGACT), on Dec.8. With our ever increasing OPTEMPO in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, the need for an advocacy organization cannot be overemphasized. The National Guard Association of Connecticut is an organization dedicated to the welfare of our Soldiers, Airmen, retirees and their families.

NGACT was reorganized in 1994, combining former officer and enlisted organizations into a single voice representing every active and retired member of the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard.

NGACT members have proven the value of the advocacy organization through improved benefits and better equipment and offer individual and family benefits

otherwise not available. Their voice is stronger than ever supporting its membership, and all Connecticut Guardsmen, both at the state and national levels.

Some of the goals of NGACT include: improving the welfare and efficiency of the National Guard of Connecticut and the National Guard of the United States; initiating and or supporting legislation, both state and federal, for the betterment of the National Guard of the state and nation; and to obtain benefits for Guard members as individuals that are similar to those enjoyed by their counterparts in the active federal service.

I strongly support the goals and activities of NGACT. In civil society, it’s important for our citizens to join organizations that support collective interests. Participation in such organizations is one of the best ways to make concerns known to the public and to our governmental leaders. Organized effort is the best way to improve the quality of life for our Soldiers and Airmen.

On the issue of never leaving anyone behind, our Connecticut National Guard Foundation is doing an incredible job to



Maj. Gen.
William A. Cugno
Adjutant General

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Perspectives

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 17. In what area do you feel civil rights have made the most progress? In what area does the most progress still need to be made?



1ST LT. EDWARD M. KELLEY
DEPUTY STATE SURGEON, MEDICAL DETACHMENT

“I’ve never really thought about it. I guess that’s a good sign: it’s not something that requires constant attention anymore. There are obviously inadequacies that need to be addressed, but with the Guard’s equal opportunity policies, we’re ahead of the game in a lot of ways. Men, women, African Americans, Whites, Hispanics ... we all have the same chances for success now. That wasn’t the case before MLK told the world he had a dream.”

O.C. CLAUDE C. HIBBERT
1ST BATTALION, 169TH REGIMENT (OCS)

“We’ve identified race as a social problem and created social services to address the system, causing a rise in the presence of African Americans in middle class, as well as politics, academia, sports and entertainment. However, we have not scientifically addressed the flawed argument that racism was built on. Due to a combination of social factors, including the legacy of racism, there is a disproportionate percentage of African Americans living below the poverty line.”



MASTER SGT. JOHN CARTER III
103RD FIGHTER WING

“Equality in the work area, you see many women and minorities moving up to top positions in the work area, supervisors, commanders, CEO’s.”



TECH. SGT. RYAN P. STARKEY
103RD MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

“I don’t know if we have [made civil rights progress] until we treat everyone as an individual. You can pass laws to ensure people act certain ways, but that does not alleviate the underlying problem [discrimination].”

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First Company Governors Foot Guard

Second Company Governors Foot Guard

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Connecticut National Guard appoints newest general

LT. COL. PAMELA K. TITUS
JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
AND
MAJ. GEORGE WORRALL
103 FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Veteran Connecticut fighter pilot, Col. Daniel R. Scace, was promoted to brigadier general during ceremonies held at Camp Rell Dec. 11.

Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, the Adjutant General, Connecticut, and Scace's wife Tami Scace, pinned on the new rank in a ceremony complete with a military honor guard and a stirring rendition of the national anthem by country music sensation Ashley Gearing.

With this promotion comes new responsibilities as the Deputy Director of Joint Force Headquarters-JFHQ, Connecticut.

"As I see it, the Joint Force Headquarters develops the plans and procedures we use in the state to defend against attacks and natural disasters," said Scace. "The focus is on homeland defense and homeland security using all the forces of the Connecticut National Guard. Remembering this is not the only thing we do as all [Army and Air Guard forces] support the service requirements."

The promotion highlights a thirty-two year career for Scace in increasingly responsible positions. Most recently he served as commander of the East Granby based 103rd Fighter Wing, Connecticut's 900 member Air

Force unit, which he commanded for four years.

For those who know him best the promotion is a reward for a lifetime of diligence and hard work that started on a farm in Pittsfield Mass.

"Looking back we never expected him to be a general, but he earned it through hard work at everything he did, even as a kid," said father Raymond Scace, who still lives in Pittsfield. "He had a choice after high school because he was accepted to both West Point and the Air Force Academy ... he was a great all around kid."

Scace joined the Connecticut Air National Guard in 1982 after serving as a fighter pilot for the United States Air Force since his commissioning from the United States Air Force Academy in 1972.

Scace lead the Fighter Wing in many deployments around the world, including Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, over the southern Iraq No Fly Zone. On Sept. 11, 2001, part of the 103rd Fighter Wing was deployed to Kuwait for Operation SOUTHERN WATCH and Scace was flying a mission in one of the unit's A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft during the attacks on America.

Scace prepared and deployed the Fighter Wing to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, where his unit performed exemplary service with no casualties.



Col. Daniel R. Scace (center) is officially pinned with brigadier general stars by his wife Tami while Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno (behind Scace), adjutant general steadies Scace from behind, at a promotion ceremony in Nett Hall on Camp Rell, Niantic, Conn. Dec. 11. Scace will serve as the Deputy Director of Joint Force Headquarters, Connecticut. (Photo by Senior Airman Erin E. McNamara)

New Army National Guard Enlisted Leader announced

STAFF SGT. BRYON COX
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Director of the Army National Guard, Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz, has announced the selection of Command Sgt. Maj. John D. Gipe as the 8th Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard.

Gipe is currently Command Sergeant Major of the Kentucky Army National Guard. He will report for duty in January 2005, first deploying for 90 days to Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, then assuming his new responsibilities around Aug. 1, 2005.

Incumbent Command Sgt. Maj. A. Frank Lever III has held the position since January 2001.

"Command Sgt. Maj. Gipe's background and experiences have prepared him well for this level of responsibility, and I'm confident that he is fully prepared to follow Frank Lever as our next Command Sergeant Major," said Schultz.

As Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard, Gipe will serve as the Director's personal advisor on all enlisted matters, with special emphasis on quality of life and training. He will also act as a representative and advocate for the 50 states, three territories and the District of

Columbia to the Army leadership and Congress.

Gipe will spend the majority of his tour visiting Army National Guard Soldiers deployed around the world, observing training and visiting schools. He will sit on several councils and boards that make decisions affecting Soldiers, units and families. His interaction with other United States and foreign military services will provide insight into joint and combined operations.

Gipe graduated from high school in Madison, Ind., and has attended Western Kentucky University and Brescia College in Owensboro, Ky. He joined the Kentucky Army National Guard in 1982 as a traditional enlisted Soldier and, over the last 12 years, has held all leadership positions in the noncommissioned officer corps through the rank of command sergeant major. He served with the Kentucky Army National Guard in various positions with the 238th Regiment, culminating as Command Sergeant Major. He has been Kentucky State Command Sergeant Major since 2002.

Prior to his current, full-time position with the Kentucky Army National Guard, Gipe worked as a locomotive engineer with CSX Railroad in Louisville, Ky.

Gipe's military education includes Air



Assault School, Instructor Trainer Course, Total Quality Management Course, Battle Focused Instructor Trainer Course and the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Kentucky Distinguished Service Medal, the Kentucky Merit Ribbon, the Kentucky Commendation Ribbon with two Oak Leaf Clusters and the Air Assault Badge.

In Memorium Lavery

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assessing and counseling (TAC) officer with the Connecticut Military Academy, Niantic. Lavery also served as the battalion executive officer for the 143rd Forward Support Battalion in Waterbury.

During his 20-plus years of military service, Lavery earned several awards and commendations, including the Army Service Ribbon, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal and the Connecticut Long Service Medal.

Lavery is survived by his wife Pamela and two children, Raymond and Samantha, as well as two sisters and two brothers (both former Newington police officers).

Lavery was a beloved member of his community and will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

New facility to house fire-fighting Soldiers

Spc. JORDAN E. WERME
65TH PCH

This coming summer, just as the New England climate begins to heat up, the Military Construction Project, a federally funded effort, will be completing a project that will help to cool Southern New England's hottest moments.

On Oct. 4, construction began at Stone's Ranch Military Training Facility on a new fire station, said Lt. Col. Gerald J. Lukowski, construction and facilities management officer for the CTARNG. The multi-million dollar facility is positioned within the cantonment area of Stone's Ranch, an area used for transition between classroom environments and field environments during training operations.

The station is designed to house two part-time teams, each consisting of seven Soldiers. Each team will include three mission-specific vehicles, including 6,000-gallon mobile water tank, said Lukowski.

Because quality of life is an important part of any construction project, said Lukowski, the fire station will include full shower and kitchen facilities, sleeping quarters and other amenities designed to make the Soldiers comfortable, including a back-up emergency generator to ensure an uninterrupted electrical supply.



The new firehouse being built at Stone's Ranch is expected to open this summer. (Photo courtesy FMO)

The fire station facility is located directly off of CT Rte 432 in East Lyme, which allows for easy access to all major highways, and ensures a quick response to any call, said Lukowski. Response teams will be able to tap a hydrant in an emergency, but will also have access to full-service buffalo filling stations in the cantonment area.

The fire station design also includes an area to provide the Soldiers with adequate

space for all mission training, he said. The training area will be secured and out of public view.

Fire station duties will be limited to military facility protection, and will make it possible for CTARNG Soldiers to participate in more thorough training.

"We're there to assist the units in the three 'R's': Readiness, recruiting and retention," said Lukowski. "Yeah, we build buildings;

that's our job. But our real mission is to take care of the units, the Soldiers, their missions that they have for the state. We're here for the units so that the units and facilities can work together."

The success of the current project has Lukowski looking forward to the next project. He is hoping to secure funding for another fire station, which will be located in the northern part of the state, in the future.

Man's best friend gets a home in Newtown: *Connecticut gets new tool in war on terror*

Spc. JESSE JAMES STANLEY
65TH PCH

Construction is underway on a 5,000-square-foot military working dog facility in Newtown. The facility, which is scheduled to be complete in late summer 2005, will house 12 military working dogs and the Soldiers who work with them. This dog unit will be the first for a military reserve unit in the United States.

The \$2.4 million kennel is another asset for the Connecticut National Guard to use in its missions to support the state as well as the country in the war on terror.

"The kennel was located in such a way to be close to I-84," said Lt. Col. Jerry Lukowski Facilities Management Officer. "We could dispatch them in support of surrounding states from there as well if we needed to."

These dogs will be able to be used for search and rescue, drug sniffing and explosive sniffing.

Six of the dogs, German Shepherds, have already been allotted to go to the new facility. Each dog will have a full-time handler as well.

"You cannot have a part-time dog or a part-time handler," Lukowski said.

In addition to the military police handling each dog, there will also be a kennel master in charge of the facility.

Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, State Adjutant General, and Lukowski are aware of the challenges in building a dog facility from previous experiences. Using these lessons learned the Newtown facility will provide the best quality of life for the dogs and the Soldiers working there possible.

The dogs will be housed in a building that is separated from the Soldiers' living and working quarters. This will reduce the noise entering the building and the smells associated with keeping a number of dogs. This building will have pens for the dogs with access to the outside. There will be radiant floor heating in the building. This is more comfortable for the dogs and cuts down on circulating bad air through the buildings. There will also be a 2 - 3 acre training area with obstacles outside.

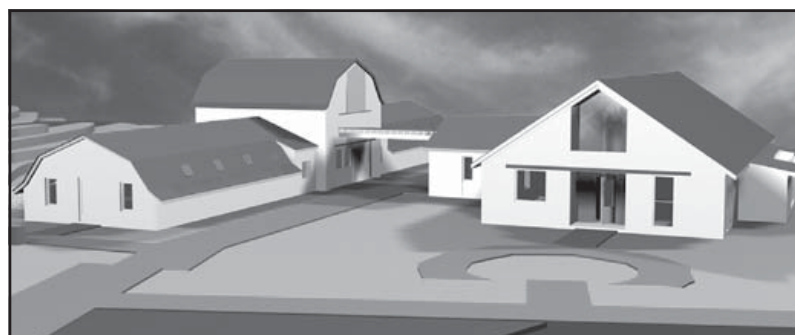
The Soldiers working in the adjacent

building will have all of the amenities required to work and possibly stay at the facility for a length of time. This includes a barracks, kitchen, showers and gym as well as rooms to conduct training or briefings.

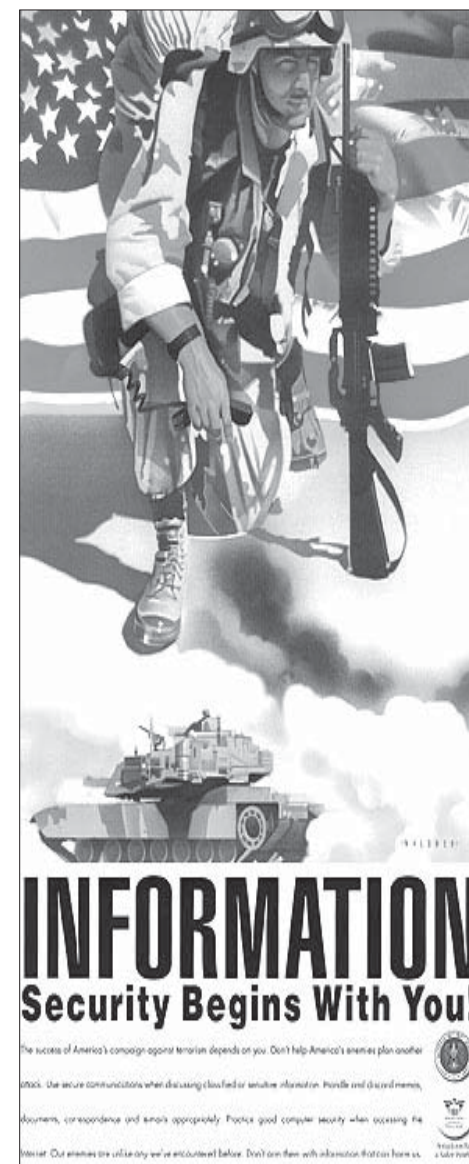
"Though Connecticut is a small state it is allocated money from Congress on par with the bigger states, California and Texas," Lukowski said.

Lukowski credits the adjutant general for his vision for the future of the Connecticut National Guard and Capt. Patrick Alstman, director of planning for the Facilities Management Office, for being successful at the national level.

"Yes, we take care of buildings," Lukowski said. "In doing so we perform our real mission, taking care of the units who use them."



Ground has been broken for the working dog facility in Newtown. (Graphic courtesy FMO)



Army National Guard Soldier receives Air Force commission

SGT. 1ST CLASS DAVID IRONS
AVCRAD PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE

Sgt. 1st Class Dana Longo, a member of the 1109th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD) in Groton, has been commissioned as a first lieutenant in the United States Air Force.

At a brief ceremony, with members of the AVCRAD present, Lt. Col. William Shea, commander of the 1109th AVCRAD, administered the Oath of Office to Longo officially appointing her as a U.S. Air Force first lieutenant.

Longo is married to John Longo and resides in Waterford. She was born in Lithuania in 1969. She immigrated to the United States in 1992. In 1993 she joined the AVCRAD where she has served in various positions including personnel services sergeant and administrative sergeant.

She deployed with the AVCRAD in February 2003 to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom and returned last March. She took advantage of the educational benefits offered by the Army National Guard to obtain her education culminating in a Masters of Business

Administration from the University of New Haven. She is currently working on her Doctorate degree at Touro University.

After her initial officer training, at Maxwell AFB, Ala, she will be assigned to Pope AFB in North Carolina as a Hospital Administrator. Asked what she has gained from the Army National Guard, Longo said "My service in the AVCRAD has been a great experience and has given me a good perspective of how enlisted service members feel and think and I will try to apply that as an officer in the Air Force. The best benefit of having been a member of the Guard has been the educational benefits which have enabled me to obtain the education which led to my commissioning as an officer."

Shea commented that "Lt. Longo is a dedicated and hard worker and has utilized the resources and benefits available to soldiers in the National Guard to obtain her educational goals. I wish her all the success. It was an honor and a privilege to administer to her the oath of office as an Air Force lieutenant."



Lt. Col. William P. Shea administers the oath of office to Air Force Lt. Dana Longo. (Photo courtesy Sgt. 1st Class David Irons, AVCRAD)

Theater Deployable Communications latest weapon in ACS communications arsenal

TECH. SGT. JOHN W. ALLEN
103RD AIR CONTROL SQUADRON

The 103 Air Control Squadron (ACS) has recently begun doing business in a new way. Over the summer, the 103 ACS received its TDC equipment, a new suite of communications equipment and a new concept of operations for the ACS community.

Up until now, the ACS has had all of its communications equipment contained in large metal shelters. These shelters can weigh as much as five tons without the trailer needed to mobilize them.

Transporting these large, heavy boxes is an expensive and airlift-intensive undertaking. TDC has forever changed that though. Gone are the large shelters, and hardened plastic transit cases contained in them.

Each transit case contains rack mounted communications equipment ranging from routers and switches, to Promina multiplexers and encryption devices.

This allows the ACS to only bring the cases that are needed to fulfill the mission. This equipment tailoring makes it much easier for the 103 ACS to get to a deployed location with minimal airlift.

Saving weight is only a side benefit of the real value that TDC provides to the ACS. The transition from the older gear allows the ACS to provide a whole host of functions that were not possible before.

By utilizing a high speed multiplexer (Promina 400) and a RedComm Switch in

conjunction with a whole slew of Cisco routers and switches, as well as the latest in encryption, the 103rd can provide real world SIPR (secure internet) and NIPR (non-secure internet).

This allows the ACS to be able to function just like they were located at an airbase, with access to Formflow, e-pubs, CAMs, etc., from any location in the world.

Or the ACS can use VOIP (Voice over Internet Phone) or VTC (Video Teleconferencing) as tools in accomplishing its mission. TDC can operate at speeds and bandwidths that were only a dream in the past.

Ethernet, Fiber optic cable and Tri-Tac cable are all capable of being connected to TDC.

The modular element of this new equipment also ensures that it can be easily upgraded to meet new requirements.

As TDC replaces a number of older pieces of equipment, there is a lot of training to accomplish in order to become proficient with it.

Keesler AFB offers more than six schools on the equipment contained in the TDC package.

The Airmen who operate and maintain TDC are presented with an opportunity to be trained on the latest commercial, off the shelf equipment available anywhere.

Hoyt remembered in Iraq

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Amongst the sea of desert camouflage, emotion could be seen washing its way across the faces of fellow Soldiers who had become more like family than co-workers. It was the second loss from the tenacious Connecticut group of 35 Soldiers, since their arrival in Iraq last March, and the third for the battle hardened company.

His peers saw Hoyt as a pillar of stability for the company. After the loss of two fellow Soldiers last April, he got back in his turret and behind the gun ready to carry out whatever mission was handed down. Hoyt was calm and confident. He was ready, his peers said.

"Spc. Hoyt was a picture of cool under fire in July, when 3rd platoon was ambushed," said Marshall bluntly. "While in the middle of the fire fight, Spc. Hoyt stood upright and engaged the enemy, not even breaking a sweat. Even during the debrief, when asked about his actions, Spc. Hoyt merely shrugged his shoulders as if it were no big deal."

The 1st Sgt., Garry Bradshaw, of Marianna, Ark., sounded the roll call shouting out names of various members from his company. Soldiers replied with a resounding, "Here First Sergeant," but when Hoyt's name was called there was no answer.

"Spc. Hoyt."

"Spc. Robert Hoyt."

"Spc. Robert W. Hoyt."

The silence was broken only by the rifle shots of a gun salute outside the tent.

When the last shot rang out, a melodious *Taps* sadly played from a lone trumpet at the back of the crowd. A display of Hoyt's boots and rifle with hanging identification tags stood solitarily at the front.

Said company commander Dereld Neugebauer of Hoyt, "He may have been a specialist in rank, but he was a general in courage and honor on the battlefield."



141 Medical Company (GA) deploys to support Operation Iraqi Freedom III (OIF III)

MAJ. CHUCK STRONG
CTARNG

On Dec. 18, at 4:30 p.m., 47 Soldiers from the 141st Medical Company boarded an aircraft that took them to Frankfurt, Germany and then to Kuwait. The unit will spend two weeks training at Camp Buerhing in northern Kuwait before heading over the berm into Tikrit, Iraq and attachment to the 36th Evac Battalion at Camp Speicher supporting all XVIII ABN Corps Soldiers during OIF III.

As they boarded the aircraft dressed in their Desert Camouflage Uniform, Protective mask and their assigned weapons, you could see on their faces, after 42 days of training at Fort Dix's Mobilization Station, the confidence and determination that only comes from troops that have worked hard together to get to this point.

"These young Soldiers trained for this deployment with enthusiasm, and like sponges absorbed the individual and collective tasks that will sustain them and the Soldiers they going to support in Theater," said 1st Sgt. John Stonoha, 141st Med. Co.

The unit arrived at Fort Dix's Mobilization Station Oct. 28 and immediately jumped into the training. Many of the tasks they trained on are not much different from what they do during Annual Training and weekend drills - Common Tasks Testing subjects such as Land Navigation, First Aid and NBC were easily completed.

The challenges of MOUT Training, Convoy Defense, Dismounted Defense and

react to a Convoy ambush on the Live Fire Convoy Range brought them together as a team like never before. They also received a 94 percent pass rate on their APFT.

"Although this is my first unit as a UA, these Soldiers are top notch and could rival any Regular Army Unit in Theater," said Sgt. 1st Class Brett Baker the, Unit Assister (UA) from TSB Devens. "They possess medical skills above and beyond many of our Regular Army units, and they have higher degrees of education and medical experience that has simply amazed me."

Baker served in Iraq with the 4th ID during OIF I and says, "The 141st MED Company and its leadership has changed the common view that National Guard Units don't have what it takes. I am very proud to have served with them since their Mobilization and would be proud to serve side by side with them in Combat."

The unit anticipates serving in three different locations in Iraq during their 12 months.

"I have complete confidence in my Platoon Leaders and Platoon Sergeants," Capt. Anne-Marie Garcia, 141st Med. Company Commander said. "They will make the mission happen and take care of their Soldiers."

The family members left behind can be proud of these Soldiers, they are great Americans serving their country that has called upon them as health service Soldiers to take care of a U.S. Force that is 6,000 miles from home.



Capt. Anne Marie Garcia (facing front) commander of the 141st Medical Company watches as her Soldiers board the bus at Fort Dix for the ride to the terminal and their flight to Iraq. (Photo courtesy Maj. Chuck Strong)



141st Medical Company At the PAX Terminal, Fort Dix, NJ (Sgt. 1st Class Baker, Unit Assister is in BDUs to the left). (Photo courtesy of Maj. Chuck Strong)



Members of the 141st Medical Company stand one last formation at Fort Dix before leaving for Iraq. (Photo by Lt. Col. John Whitford, State PAO)

What a difference a day makes...

Connecticut Guardsmen celebrate new year in new country

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCO

It was New Year's Eve, a time for reflection on the past year, and celebration of the new year.

It was a time for party hats and bottles of champagne.

It was a time for family and friends.

But for members of Bravo and Delta Companies, 189th Aviation, it was a time for reflection on the training they had received, and preparation for a new year in a new country.

It was a time for Kevlar helmets and bottles of water.

It was time for fellow Soldiers who had become friends and family.

The Soldiers, members of two Black Hawk units, were on their way to Iraq to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, and they were leaving on New Year's Eve from Fort Sill, OK.

"It's time," said Sgt. 1st Class Dawn Church, Company D. "We've been here for a long time, training for our mission. Now it's time to go do our mission and come home."

Lt. Col. Thomas Boland, 189th battalion commander, CW5 Mark Marini and State

Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zastaury travelled to Fort Sill to see the two units off.

After waiting at the airport for the first of the two units to arrive there, the Connecticut contingent decided to go to the gymnasium that was doubling as a staging area, to see the Soldiers.

Members of Company B and four members of Company D were surprised to see the familiar faces of home when they entered the gym unannounced. Their tired faces lit up with smiles when they saw the group that had flown out to see them off.

"We didn't expect this," said Sgt. Eric Newton of Company D. "It's really nice that so many people gave up being at home for the holiday to come see us."

Capt. Mark Strout, commander of Company B and CW2 Kurt Suitor, commander of Company D both said they were proud of the hard work and training the members of their units had accomplished while at Fort Sill.

They said their units were ready for their missions and eager to get started.

"We'll make you proud," Strout said as his troops were moving out to the busses that would take them to the waiting plane. "I'll bring them all back."



Soldiers from D Company take each other's photo while State Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zastaury looks on.



Members of B Company take time to catch up on reading or sleep while waiting to depart Fort Sill.



Company B, 189th Aviation, along with four members of Company D, pose for a group photo Lt. Col. Tom Boland, State Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zastaury and CW5 Mark Marini before leaving Fort Sill on New Year's Eve for Iraq.



Capt. Mark Strout, commander of Company B, 189th Aviation, stands watch as his unit files out of the building towards busses that will take them to their plane headed for Iraq. The Black Hawk unit will be in Iraq for one year.



Members of Company D, 189th Aviation pose for their group photo on Dec. 31, hours before leaving for Iraq. The unit, along with Company B, is expected to be in Iraq for a year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Holiday wish lists shortened by return home: MPs have wish lists fulfilled

"Hearing my daughter sing 'Jingle Bells' and messing up the phrases... I didn't get to experience that last year."

Staff Sgt. Robert Bachman

STAFF SGT. STEVE MARKOWSKI
65th PCH

If you had asked members of the 143rd Military Police Company what they wanted for Christmas 2004, you'd likely have been told that Santa arrived early this time. Or, maybe his services just were not needed as much as in the past.

Deployments have a way of shortening lists of what Soldiers and their families want for Christmas.

"My wife asks me what I want and it's difficult because I don't want anything," said Staff Sgt. David Konkol. "I'm just glad that we're together." Konkol and his wife Terri have been married for nearly six years, but the 15-month activation for the 143rd MPs brought the first long-time separation for them. They have no children.

"I'm grateful to be home this year, and that's my Christmas present," said Sgt. Robert Roberge. "I'm just glad to be home." His wife Faith had the same present at the top of her list.

"Her list is very small this year. Usually it would be a long list. I think we're both just so glad to be together this year.

The 143rd MPs held a unit Christmas party Dec. 11. The gathering on the night of their drill weekend allowed members of the unit and their families to contrast this holiday season compared to that of last year, when the unit was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. At that time, unit members were doing their best to keep safe while driving Humvees through dangerous streets in Iraq. This year, they are able to drive their own vehicles on Connecticut roads, passing brightly decorated houses and town centers.

While on the way to this year's Christmas party, Staff Sgt. Robert Bachman, saw something that he could not have seen during December 2003. While he and his wife Pam were driving their 4 1/2-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter to the babysitter's house, this year's Christmas present arrived two weeks early for the full-time Guardsman.

"Their faces lit up just from seeing houses with Christmas lights. I'm glad I was able to see that," Bachman said, adding that there have been some sounds that he is cherishing, as well. "Hearing my daughter



Staff Sgt. Robert Bachman and his wife, Pam, were all smiles at the 143rd Military Police Company's holiday party. Last year, the two were separated by thousands of miles during the holidays while Staff Sgt. Bachman was supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and helping to train the Iraqi Police Force. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Marc Pucinski, 143rd Military Police)

sing 'Jingle Bells' and messing up the phrases... I didn't get to experience that last year."

Bachman said that his wife had family support in taking care of their children. They also received a boost from the Connecticut National Guard Family Program. Christmas 2003 marked the inaugural season for "Operation ELF," a program developed to assist family members whose loved ones are serving overseas.

"Operation ELF visited my family and gave some toys. It was good to know that someone was taking care of my family," Bachman said.

Both Bachman and Konkol mentioned seeing Christmas decorations while in their compounds last year, but those symbols were not nearly enough to put them in the Christmas spirit.

"You miss family members just as much at Christmas as you do at any other time of the year," Konkol said, adding that seeing Christmas decorations did have impact. "In a way it was magnified. You start thinking about what you would be doing with (family) around the holidays and it just makes it more miserable."

"We worked every day, so it was just like any other day," said Sgt. Robert Roberge, who worked in the operations center. "Even though there were Christmas trees around us, the Christmas spirit just wasn't there."

Roberge saw his own family's Christmas tree when he arrived home from the deployment – even though that was in April 2004.

"My wife still had the tree up when I got home. There were gifts under the tree for

me," Roberge said, adding that the smaller-sized evergreen was potted, and that his wife took care of it in the house for nearly five months. "When we put it outside, it died," he said, laughing at the irony.

When Roberge left on the lengthy deployment, his wife Faith was sharing their house with her 22-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son.

For Christmas 2004, by the time her husband came home, and the 2003 Christmas tree met its fate, she was living in the house by herself. Her daughter finished college and moved out. Her son joined the Marine Reserve.

Because her husband is a supervisor for a group home run by the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation, a work schedule once again interfered with their Christmas plans. Their time together on Christmas day was cut short, but that was no big deal, they both said.

"I know he's here, I know he's safe," she said. "That's what's important. Gifts mean nothing. Just having your spouse home and safe is all you need. I rest much easier knowing that he is home safe. This year, no matter what happens, I know he's just across town.

Another unit member who found himself on the work schedule for Christmas Day 2004 is Pfc. William Zampaglione, who is a security guard in his civilian life. Working at that job on the holiday wasn't such a big deal for him compared to the Christmas season in 2003.

Last year's Christmas season was difficult for him because he was not in Iraq with his unit. He was at Ft. Drum, NY recuperating

from injuries suffered in Iraq. His injuries kept him from returning to the combat area until the unit's deployment was almost complete.

"It was hard. I was able to come (to Connecticut for Christmas) but I was thinking that everyone was overseas, and I was over here. That was pretty difficult," he said. While in Connecticut for a brief period of time, Zampaglione got involved with a Christmas drive led by WTIC-AM radio personality Jim Vicevich, one of the unit's best-known advocates.

This year, Zampaglione and his wife kept their Christmas plans simple by relaxing in their new house until his evening work shift.

Not every married member of the 143rd MPs was separated while the unit was away on its deployment. Sgt. Erina Hevey and Staff Sgt. Mike Hevey were together in Iraq for Christmas. Sort of.

At that time, the two were working on different shifts at separate compounds in Baghdad. But, they were able to have Christmas dinner together – in the unit's dining facility.

"We had Christmas dinner together and then went back to our separate shifts," Erina said of the almost chance encounter.

"We just kind of got lucky," Mike said, referring to the fact that their dinner breaks arrived at the same time despite working on different shifts.

"It was kind of like a 'Hey! How ya doin' type thing," they both said.

Christmas gifts to each other last year included toiletries and compact discs. Which were presented "in the plastic, PX-bag wrapping paper," Erina said. Her mother also sent her a Christmas tree, which Erina kept next to her cot.

Mike was occasionally able to stop by and visit his wife and the Christmas tree, but "it just didn't feel like Christmas last year," he said. He added that receiving cards, letters and gifts from back home helped get them through the lengthy deployment.

"To anybody who can send anything to the people over there now, little things mean the world to the people over there. It certainly did to us," he said.

"I know he's here, I know he's safe. That's what's important. Gifts mean nothing. Just having your spouse home and safe is all you need."

Faith Roberge

Military and holiday traditions mark AVCRAD celebration

Sgt. JESSE. J. STANLEY JR.
65th PCH

More than 200 families gathered Dec. 12 in Groton at the Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot to celebrate the holidays together. Families of the 1109th AVCRAD and 185th AVN came together for the first holiday drill since the units' deployments. The day was full of both military and holiday traditions.

All military personnel were present in their Class A uniforms for inspection. Following the inspection Soldiers were honored with awards and presentations for achievements while deployed and since returning home.

After the military formalities of the formation, inspection and awards were completed, the families all joined the retirees, who also came, to enjoy each other's company and take part in some of the activities planned for the rest of the day.

"The whole day is very relaxed and family oriented," said Lt. Col. William Shea, Commander 1109th AVCRAD. "A lot of retirees

came too, some who have been retired for more than 10 years. The unit is like a big family."

The entire hangar was decorated festively. "We used a lot of the same decorations we used while we were in Kuwait," Shea said.

While deployed, the Soldiers made decorations out of whatever was handy. Packing materials, which were common, were cut out and painted like candy canes and holly.

Santa Claus made an appearance for photos and to see the children as he sat in his chair in front of a huge Christmas tree the Soldiers erected.

Everyone brought something to the party, which at times was more like a family reunion.

There were crafts for the kids to do from art projects to making wreaths from extra evergreen tree limbs.

The units, who spent the holidays away last year, were able to enjoy being home and sharing this time with both each other and their families.



Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Ives and her sons, Dylan, Donald and Zachary Sholes, and Sgt. 1st Class Mike McJunkins and his daughter, Korea, pose for a family photo at the AVCRAD holiday party. The painting they are standing in front of was painted by AVCRAD member Sgt. 1st Class William Ortiz while the unit was Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit transported the large mural back to the U.S. when they returned earlier this year. (Photo by CW3 Jay Bowdy, 1109th AVCRAD)

Attention Soldiers, Airmen and Families The Connecticut Guardian wants your photos!

If you have photos you wish to share with the rest of our Guard family, we would like to publish them in the Guardian.

We are looking for photos of soldiers and airmen who are deployed either relaxing or working. We are looking for photos of family members at home or at play. We are looking for photos of families packing care packages to send to their loved ones.

We will print them in the Guardian as space allows so they can be seen and shared by Connecticut Soldiers, Airmen and families around the world.

Please e-mail your photos to ctguardian@ct.ngb.army.mil

Air Control Squadron to work 'Purple' exercise

CAPT. GLENN SHERMAN
103rd AIR CONTROL SQUADRON
OPERATIONS TRAINING OFFICER

As the New Year begins, a new set of challenges accompanies the Airmen of the 103rd Air Control Squadron. With DoD officials stressing the importance of "joint" interoperability, the 103 ACS will participate in a major Systems Training Exercise (STE) in February consisting of Army, Navy, Air Force, and even British Navy assets.

A true "purple" war fighting exercise, called a Multi-Battle Group In-Port Exercise (MBGIE), will take place Feb. 8-10 using computer simulation scenarios that will be data linked to all service players.

The intent of this exercise is to train, test and stress all service components the importance of interoperability, and streamline the process for Command and Control along different Service components.

Using a fictitious country surrounded by hostile forces and bordering the ocean; Navy, Air Force, Army, and British forces must protect, and ultimately repel any invading forces that threaten the sovereignty of this country. The 103rd ACS, as an Air Force Command and Control platform, will work to coordinate Defensive Counter Air missions, Offensive Counter Air missions, and Air Defense artillery Strikes against these hostile forces.

The success of this warfighting exercise is dependent upon all players talking the same language and coordinating all aspects of "war." From the launching of fighter aircraft, to directing the use of Air Defense

Artillery against hostile airborne forces, to directing aircraft to attack time sensitive ground targets, all information must be coordinated between all service components to assure a successful mission, and prevent the unacceptable alternative of fratricide.

Preparation for this exercise, and future training or real world missions has already begun. The Air Control Squadron Operations Section has been training using simulation scenarios that generate hostile and friendly airborne forces. Experienced Surveillance and Weapons Combat Mission Ready personnel have been training new and inexperienced personnel on the proper procedures to identify and communicate with airborne assets in the execution of the mission.

Additionally, all Operations personnel have been receiving training on new equipment recently installed in the primary piece of equipment, the TYQ-23 Operations Module (OM).

The OM recently received a new software upgrade that allows the 103rd Air Control squadron to more effectively communicate with airborne Command and Control assets like the E-3 AWACS, airborne execution assets like the F-15 fighters, and ground assets like Army Patriot sites. The new upgrade allows sending messages via data links to these air and ground units (think purple), which clarifies targeting and firing responsibilities. This upgrade is just one example of an ongoing process that closes the loop between service components ensuring successful mission execution.

For ACS Ops Section, it's back to training

CAPT. GUY MARINO
103rd ACS

The 103rd Air Control Squadron (ACS) Operations section continues to excel in a high tempo environment. After concluding a successful four-month Noble Eagle voluntary activation to the nation's capital in October, the section rolled into a Simulated Training Exercise (STE) in November. This type of training is invaluable to ensuring the sections Combat Mission Ready Status.

In defense of our nation's capitol, the 103rd was the lead Air Force Unit charged with working in the Joint Air Defense Operations Center, nicknamed the "JADOC." Members of the 103rd manned the JADOC around the clock at Bolling Air Force Base to watch for potentially hijacked or dangerous aircraft. In this Joint effort, the 103rd ACS worked side by side with our Army counterparts, the 3rd Battalion 265th ADA (Avenger NG Florida), based in Sarasota, Florida.

Upon returning to Connecticut, working out of Camp Rell, the section received valuable training during the November UTA STE. In a virtual training environment via tactical satellite connectivity, the unit simulated fighting an air war with the 255th ACS based in Gulfport Mississippi, and the 154th ACS based in Kauai, Hawaii. New technologies were utilized including Chat Rooms and Theater Deployable Communications Equipment, ensuring that our training effectively simulates real world contingencies.

Now that the 103rd is back home, training events like this will occur quarterly, combined with live training with fighter aircraft. Events like this allow us to train new folks in a classroom environment. Our next big STE will occur in February, when we will be training with all four services and our coalition partners the British Navy. The lead for this exercise will be the Navy's 2nd Fleet including the JFK Carrier Strike Group. This will allow us to keep our number of Combat Mission Ready operators at the highest levels.

Focus: Aviation unveils life without Comanche

SGT. 1ST CLASS MARCIA TRIGGS

Editor's note: This is the twelfth article in a weekly series on the 17 Army focus areas. This one focuses on "Army Aviation."

The Army's aviation fleet is undergoing a total overhaul, and the main priority is increasing survivability to protect the aircraft and the Soldiers it carries.

Aviators, crewmen, commanders and the technology community gathered to unfold the Army's aviation transformation plan during the Army Aviation Association of America Annual Convention in Nashville, Tenn., March 24-27.

By 2011, the Army will purchase 903 new aircraft, upgrade the current fleet to be more survivable, lethal and agile and work with the sister services to develop a Joint Multi-Role Helicopter.

During a four-and-a-half month study, members on the Army Aviation Task Force made more than 120 recommendations on how to turn aviation brigades into joint and expeditionary forces that are modular units of action. The total bill comes out to \$12.8 billion, the Pentagon official said.

"We're going to ask industry what weapon systems our potential adversaries may have, and we're going to be very innovative in how we deal with those threats," said Lt. Gen. Richard Cody, the Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations, G3.

Out of the recommendations came the idea to develop three new aircraft — a light utility helicopter, an armored reconnaissance helicopter and a cargo aircraft.

"It would be premature to talk about what the helicopters are going to look like. Right now we're in the capabilities phase," Cody said.

In a concerted effort Fort Rucker, Ala., Training and Doctrine Command and the Headquarters Department of the Army Staff will decide on the capabilities they want, and then let industry meet the niche, Cody said.

A more immediate addition to the aviation ranks will be unmanned aerial vehicles. The Army was given three I-GNAT UAVs as a congressional plus up and right now two are deployed to Iraq.

It's not just about I-GNAT, UAVs in general are a great contribution to the war fighter, the Pentagon official said. They perform reconnaissance and surveillance missions, and are becoming more and more important, the official added.

The Army will spend \$390 million toward UAV acceleration. Currently in the Central Command area there are Ravens, which are tactical UAVs used at the platoon level. The smaller UAVs are referred to as Shadow and the larger ones, I-GNAT and Hunter, are used at division and brigade level.

The Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Peter Schoomaker advised the Aviation Task Force to improve survivability, increase deployability, optimize capabilities and shorten the logistics tail, the Pentagon official said.

Now the aviation field is following the infantry's example of the Stryker by creating a "common cockpit." Like the Stryker, which has 10 variants but same or similar parts, helicopters will share the same hardware and software.

In 2003, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Fort Campbell, Ky., implemented their version of "common cockpit" referred to as the Common Avionics Architecture System or CAAS.

By placing common hardware and software

in three of the regiment's aircraft, training was simplified and the logistics demands on the unit were reduced, the G3 official said. The open avionics architecture also will make it easier to upgrade the aircraft with third-party vendor software.

The use of CAAS by the conventional Army is one initiative that will be adopted from the Special Operations community, Cody said.

"We always want the 160th to be the premier aviation force in the Army," Cody said. "We always want them well ahead of the conventional force."

Schoomaker, who has served with both conventional and Special Operations forces, challenges the aviation community to use Special Operations initiatives that can be sustained and resourced, Cody said.

In an interview at Fort Rucker, Schoomaker said that in the future there will be a closer relationship between what's occurring in Special Operations aviation and conventional aviation. Army Aviation in the conventional sense will move to another level, a higher level. At the same time it allows the 160th to move to an even higher-level capability, he added.

The need to purchase and upgrade the current fleet is the reason behind the Comanche termination, officials said.

"Had we not terminated the Comanche, I would be absolutely concerned," Cody said. "By 2011 we would have had to cut our aviation fleet by a sizable number."

At the termination of the Comanche, only two aircraft had been built, and \$6.9 billion spent since 1983, said the Pentagon official. If the Army had continued to fund

the program it would cost \$14.6 billion more to purchase 121 aircraft by 2011 and up to \$2 billion more to add the survivability equipment that is being added to the rest of the Army's fleet, the official added.

However, the technology that was developed for the Comanche will not be lost, but will be harvested in other Army aviation programs.

"We needed a place where we could take the Comanche technology and ensure that it was retained," the Pentagon official said.

The goal is to work through a joint solution with the sister services and decide on a new rotorcraft by 2020 or 2025, the official added.

Transformation plans for the aviation field complement the combined arms fight, Cody said. If you take any one weapon system, a Bradley, Abrams or UAV and put it up against an enemy, the enemy will learn to deal with it, the official said. It's a combination of all those weapon systems, the official added.

(Editor's note: The Army's 17 immediate areas of focus include: The Soldier; The Bench; Combat Training Centers/Battle Command Training Program; Leader Development and Education; Army Aviation; Current to Future Force; The Network; Modularity; Active Component/ Reserve Component Balance; Force Stabilization; Actionable Intelligence; Installations as Flagships; Authorities, Responsibilities, and Accountability; Resource Processes; Strategic Communications; Joint Expeditionary Army with a Campaign-quality Capability; and Logistics. To view a brief synopsis of each area, visit The Way Ahead.)

Cendant presents check



Gerald Pearce, executive vice president of Cendant Mobility, Master Sgt. Charles Destival, 439th QM Co., Connecticut Army Reserves and Cendant Mobility manager; Kevin Kelleher, President & CEO, Cendant Mobility; Command Sgt. Maj. Raymond Zastaur Jr., state command sergeant major; Kim Hoffman, director of family services; Col. (Ret.) Thomas P. Thomas, executive director, Connecticut National Guard Foundation; Col. Lou Preziosi, chief of staff, Connecticut National Guard; Sgt. 1st Class Mark Spencer, recruiting and retention, pose for a group photo after Cendant representatives presented a check for \$25,000 to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation to help families of the Connecticut's Soldiers and Airmen. (Photo by Spc. Jesse J. Stanley Jr., 65th PCH)

208th PSD heads to Kuwait



Members of the 208th Personnel Services Detachment prepare to load up their flight for to Kuwait last month. The Niantic-based unit will spend the next year in Kuwait in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The 208th manages combat-essential personnel information and provides direct military support to strength managers and commanders. The unit left Connecticut in October for its mobilization station. (Photo by Lt. Col. John Whitford, State PAO)

TAG shows support for ORI

MAJ. GEORGE H. WORRALL III
103rd FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

The Connecticut Adjutant General met with the 103rd Fighter Wing leadership Dec. 4 to talk about the year ahead and the Operational Readiness Inspection retake scheduled for April 2005.

In the auditorium seats, the wing's first sergeants, commanders and chief master sergeants listened intently as Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, adjutant general, spoke sympathetically about the challenge faced during the May 2004 inspection.

"This was something new for us in the Guard," said Cugno. "There was not a unit who had one (an A-10 ORI) recently we could go see."

The general made the point that the wing could learn from the inspection.

"We had a plan...now we have the time and experience to tweak the plan and make it work," said Cugno.

Showing optimism in the fighter wing's capability and the leadership, Cugno made a prediction.

"I will bet a month's pay they (the next groups to be inspected) will be here picking your brains because you guys are writing the book on how to do this," said Cugno. "You have great deployments, are moving in the right direction and have a great record of success."

Then pointing to Col. Daniel L. Peabody, commander, 103rd Fighter Wing "This is the guy that has to come up with the answers and ensure that the esprit-de-corps is up and

we do not break the organization."

What then did the general want from the rest of the assembled leadership?

"I need help from you," said Cugno. "You have got to keep the chins of your people up so they like what they are doing and do not want to leave. We need to work on the performance and recruiting."

With the two goals listed, the general put the performance and recruiting marching orders in the context of the unit's future. The general explained news of the transformation in the Air National Guard which will reduce the number of flying units like Bradley.

"The plan is looking at replacing some flying units, to become non-flying units," said Cugno. "The arguments...of NGB (National Guard Bureau) are things like manning and inspections. I have a willingness to support and defend the organization we have. Strength and performance, you cannot argue because they are facts.

"I need to bring in people. If we do not get our strength up, the footprint is going to get smaller."

Before Cugno left to visit the troops and see the ORI preparation efforts first hand, he asked for questions from the assembled wing leadership, there were none.

With the troops, the general thanked them for the work they had done.

"It has been a great year (of accomplishment) and do not let anyone tell you different," said Cugno.



Lt. Col. James Works (left), commander, and 2nd Lt. Krzysztof Kucharski (center), engineer, 103rd Civil Engineering Squadron, explain some of the improvements they have made to command and control procedures for the April 2005 Operational Readiness Inspection to Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, adjutant general, Dec. 4 in the Bradley Air National Guard Base Civil Engineering building. (Photo by Maj. George Worrall III, 103rd FW PAO)

He asked the troops for their help in the recruiting effort too and offered carrots without the steak.

"I want you to know that anyone who brings in a recruit I will take to lunch at the officers club," said Cugno. Adding in jest "but you cannot order the steak."

After the adjutant general's visit to Bradley ANG Base, he directed the joint

force headquarters to support the wing in any way they could to ensure the success of the inspection.

"Supporting the wing to get through the ORI until April is my primary duty right now," said Brig. Gen. Daniel R. Scace, deputy director, Joint Force Headquarters Connecticut.

Units celebrate first Christmas at home since deployment

PFC.. JOSEPH BROOKS
65th PCH

Members of the Connecticut Army National Guard's 247th Engineer Detachment and 248th Engineer Company celebrated their first Christmas at home since their deployment to Southeast Asia. The Christmas parties took place at the National Guard Armories in Norwich and New London on Dec. 12. The Soldiers had the opportunity to celebrate the holiday season with their families and with their units which many have called their "extended families."

The catered events had treats for all ages and featured a special guest. Santa made his appearance first at the Norwich Armory, and then at the New London Armory to give out presents to the children.

The units had dinner together with their families and fellow Soldiers, many of them recounting memories of their last Christmas which was spent far away from home. The veterans shared stories with the new members of their units while old friends remembered a Christmas in Iraq.

Sgt. Ronald Smith, 247th Eng. Det. was on leave during the holidays last year but recounted how the rest of his unit spent Christmas.

"Our unit celebrated Christmas in a 4000-

year-old monastery that was once occupied by the Israelites," said Smith.

The Soldiers proudly showed off pictures of their Christmas past, forged new memories with Christmas present but more than anything they looked forward to Christmas future.



Evan Adamcik, son of Cpt. Stefan Adamcik and Jake Reynolds, godson of Spc. Nikkia Cobbs pose in front of the tree at the 134th MP's Christmas party. (Photo by Pfc. Joseph Brooks, 65th PCH)



Spc. Lindsay Nottbohm, 248th Eng. Co. helps Alexis Costa make an ornament during the holiday party for the 248th Engineer Company at the Norwich Armory. Members of the unit were spending their first Christmas with family and friends since returning from Iraq. (Photo by Pfc. Joseph Brooks, 65th PCH)

Executive order makes 2005 pay tables official

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFP) — President George W. Bush signed an executive order Dec. 30 making the 2005 military and civilian pay tables official.

The 2005 pay scales are available online at :
— Military Pay Tables — www.dfas.mil/money/milpay/pay/.

— Civilian Pay Tables — www.opm.gov/oca/05tables/index.asp/
Congress approved an average raise of 3.5 percent for military servicemembers, and the President’s order provided for an across-the-board increase of 2.5 percent in base pay for the Foreign Service and certain pay scales used by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

PROPOSED DRILL PAY (Effective January 1, 2005)															
Pay Grade	2 or less	Over 2	Over 3	Over 4	Over 6	Over 8	Over 10	Over 12	Over 14	Over 16	Over 18	Over 20	Over 22	Over 24	Over 26
O-7	6,666.00	6,975.60	7,119.00	7,233.00	7,439.10	7,642.50	7,878.30	8,113.50	8,349.00	9,089.40	9,714.60	9,714.60	9,714.60	9,714.60	9,763.80
1 Drill	222.20	232.52	237.30	241.10	247.97	254.75	262.61	270.45	278.30	302.98	323.82	323.82	323.82	323.82	325.46
4 Drills	888.80	930.08	949.20	964.40	991.88	1019.00	1050.44	1081.80	1113.20	1211.92	1295.28	1295.28	1295.28	1295.28	1301.84
O-6	4,940.70	5,427.90	5,784.00	5,784.00	5,805.90	6,054.90	6,087.90	6,087.90	6,433.80	7,045.50	7,404.60	7,763.40	7,967.70	8,174.10	8,575.50
1 Drill	164.69	180.93	192.80	192.80	193.53	201.83	202.93	202.93	214.46	234.85	246.82	258.78	265.59	272.47	285.85
4 Drills	658.76	723.72	771.20	771.20	774.12	807.32	811.72	811.72	857.84	939.40	987.28	1035.12	1062.36	1089.88	1143.40
O-5	4,118.70	4,639.80	4,961.10	5,021.40	5,221.50	5,341.80	5,605.50	5,799.00	6,048.60	6,431.10	6,613.20	6,793.20	6,997.50	6,997.50	6,997.50
1 Drill	137.29	154.66	165.37	167.38	174.05	178.06	186.85	193.30	201.62	214.37	220.44	226.44	233.25	233.25	233.25
4 Drills	549.16	618.64	661.48	669.52	696.20	712.24	747.40	773.20	806.48	857.48	881.76	905.76	933.00	933.00	933.00
O-4	3,553.80	4,113.90	4,388.40	4,449.60	4,704.30	4,977.60	5,317.50	5,582.70	5,766.60	5,872.20	5,933.70	5,933.70	5,933.70	5,933.70	5,933.70
1 Drill	118.46	137.13	146.28	148.32	156.81	165.92	177.25	186.09	192.22	195.74	197.79	197.79	197.79	197.79	197.79
4 Drills	473.84	548.52	585.12	593.28	627.24	663.68	709.00	744.36	768.88	782.96	791.16	791.16	791.16	791.16	791.16
O-3	3,124.50	3,542.10	3,823.20	4,168.20	4,367.70	4,586.70	4,728.60	4,962.00	5,083.20	5,083.20	5,083.20	5,083.20	5,083.20	5,083.20	5,083.20
1 Drill	104.15	118.07	127.44	138.94	145.59	152.89	157.62	165.40	169.44	169.44	169.44	169.44	169.44	169.44	169.44
4 Drills	416.60	472.28	509.76	555.76	582.36	611.56	630.48	661.60	677.76	677.76	677.76	677.76	677.76	677.76	677.76
O-2	2,699.40	3,074.70	3,541.20	3,660.90	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20	3,736.20
1 Drill	89.98	102.49	118.04	122.03	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54	124.54
4 Drills	359.92	409.96	472.16	488.12	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16	498.16
O-1	2,343.60	2,439.00	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10	2,948.10
1 Drill	78.12	81.30	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27	98.27
4 Drills	312.48	325.20	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08	393.08
O-3E				4,168.20	4,367.70	4,586.70	4,728.60	4,962.00	5,158.50	5,271.00	5,424.60				
1 Drill				138.94	145.59	152.89	157.62	165.40	171.95	175.70	180.82				
4 Drills				555.76	582.36	611.56	630.48	661.60	687.80	702.80	723.28				
O-2E				3,660.90	3,736.20	3,855.30	4,055.70	4,211.10	4,326.60	4,326.60	4,326.60				
1 Drill				122.03	124.54	128.51	135.19	140.37	144.22	144.22	144.22				
4 Drills				488.12	498.16	514.04	540.76	561.48	576.88	576.88	576.88				
O-1E				2,948.10	3,148.80	3,264.90	3,383.70	3,500.70	3,660.90	3,660.90	3,660.90				
1 Drill				98.27	104.96	108.83	112.79	116.69	122.03	122.03	122.03				
4 Drills				393.08	419.84	435.32	451.16	466.76	488.12	488.12	488.12				
W-5												5,548.20	5,738.40	5,929.20	6,121.20
1 Drill												184.94	191.28	197.64	204.04
4 Drills												739.76	765.12	790.56	816.16
W-4	3,228.60	3,473.40	3,573.30	3,671.40	3,840.30	4,007.10	4,176.30	4,341.00	4,511.70	4,779.00	4,950.00	5,117.40	5,290.80	5,461.80	5,636.40
1 Drill	107.62	115.78	119.11	122.38	128.01	133.57	139.21	144.70	150.39	159.30	165.00	170.58	176.36	182.06	187.88
4 Drills	430.48	463.12	476.44	489.52	512.04	534.28	556.84	578.80	601.56	637.20	660.00	682.32	705.44	728.24	751.52
W-3	2,948.40	3,071.70	3,197.40	3,238.80	3,371.10	3,522.30	3,721.80	3,918.90	4,128.30	4,285.50	4,442.10	4,509.30	4,578.90	4,730.10	4,881.30
1 Drill	98.28	102.39	106.58	107.96	112.37	117.41	124.06	130.63	137.61	142.85	148.07	150.31	152.63	157.67	162.71
4 Drills	393.12	409.56	426.32	431.84	449.48	469.64	496.24	522.52	550.44	571.40	592.28	601.24	610.52	630.68	650.84
W-2	2,593.50	2,741.70	2,871.30	2,965.50	3,046.20	3,268.20	3,438.00	3,564.00	3,687.00	3,771.30	3,842.40	3,977.40	4,111.50	4,247.40	
1 Drill	86.45	91.39	95.71	98.85	101.54	108.94	114.60	118.80	122.90	125.71	128.08	132.58	137.05	141.58	
4 Drills	345.80	365.56	382.84	395.40	406.16	435.76	458.40	475.20	491.60	502.84	512.32	530.32	548.20	566.32	
W-1	2,290.20	2,477.70	2,603.10	2,684.40	2,900.40	3,030.90	3,146.40	3,275.40	3,360.90	3,438.30	3,564.30	3,659.70			
1 Drill	76.34	82.59	86.77	89.48	96.68	101.03	104.88	109.18	112.03	114.61	118.81	121.99			
4 Drills	305.36	330.36	347.08	357.92	386.72	404.12	419.52	436.72	448.12	458.44	475.24	487.96			
E-9							3,901.20	3,989.70	4,101.00	4,232.40	4,364.10	4,575.90	4,755.00	4,943.70	5,231.70
1 Drill							130.04	132.99	136.70	141.08	145.47	152.53	158.50	164.79	174.39
4 Drills							520.16	531.96	546.80	564.32	581.88	610.12	634.00	659.16	697.56
E-8						3,193.50	3,334.80	3,422.10	3,527.10	3,640.50	3,845.40	3,949.20	4,125.90	4,224.00	4,465.20
1 Drill						106.45	111.16	114.07	117.57	121.35	128.18	131.64	137.53	140.80	148.84
4 Drills						425.80	444.64	456.28	470.28	485.40	512.72	526.56	550.12	563.20	595.36
E-7	2,220.00	2,423.10	2,515.80	2,638.80	2,734.50	2,899.50	2,992.20	3,084.60	3,249.60	3,332.40	3,410.70	3,458.70	3,620.40	3,725.10	3,990.00
1 Drill	74.00	80.77	83.86	87.96	91.15	96.65	99.74	102.82	108.32	111.08	113.69	115.29	120.68	124.17	133.00
4 Drills	296.00	323.08	335.44	351.84	364.60	386.60	398.96	411.28	433.28	444.32	454.76	461.16	482.72	496.68	532.00
E-6	1,920.30	2,112.60	2,205.90	2,296.50	2,391.00	2,604.30	2,687.10	2,779.20	2,859.90	2,888.70	2,908.20	2,908.20	2,908.20	2,908.20	2,908.20
1 Drill	64.01	70.42	73.53	76.55	79.70	86.81	89.57	92.64	95.33	96.29	96.94	96.94	96.94	96.94	96.94
4 Drills	256.04	281.68	294.12	306.20	318.80	347.24	358.28	370.56	381.32	385.16	387.76	387.76	387.76	387.76	387.76
E-5	1,759.50	1,877.10	1,967.70	2,060.70	2,205.30	2,329.80	2,421.60	2,450.70	2,450.70	2,450.70	2,450.70	2,450.70	2,450.70	2,450.70	2,450.70
1 Drill	58.65	62.57	65.59	68.69	73.51	77.66	80.72	81.69	81.69	81.69	81.69	81.69	81.69	81.69	81.69
4 Drills	234.60	250.28	262.36	274.76	294.04	310.64	322.88	326.76	326.76	326.76	326.76	326.76	326.76	326.76	326.76
E-4	1,612.80	1,695.60	1,787.10	1,877.70	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80	1,957.80
1 Drill	53.76	56.52	59.57	62.59	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26	65.26
4 Drills	215.04	226.08	238.28	250.36	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04	261.04
E-3	1,456.20	1,547.70	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00	1,641.00
1 Drill	48.54	51.59	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70	54.70
4 Drills	194.16	206.36	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80	218.80
E-2	1,384.50							E-1 (4mos ACDU+)	1,235.10						
1 Drill	46.15							1 Drill	41.17						
4 Drills	184.60							4 Drills	164.68						

Scholarships for military children application deadline approaches

ADAM AUSTIN
SPECIAL TO AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

FORT LEE, Va., Jan. 7, 2005 – The deadline to apply for \$1,500 scholarships from the “Scholarships for Military Children” program is Feb. 16, and all applications must be delivered to a Defense Commissary Agency store by the close of business that day.

At least one scholarship will be awarded at every commissary location with qualified applicants, agency officials said.

The application can be downloaded through a link on the Defense Commissary Agency’s Web site, or from the Scholarships for Military Children site, and can be filled out by hand or on the computer. Copies of the application also are available at commissaries worldwide.

Edna Hoogewind, the

Connecticut Military Department News

Second Co. Governor's Foot Guard Band aids battered women

Safe Haven, a Waterbury program to aid women escaping from abusive situations, was aided by the Second Company Governor's Foot Guard Band at a benefit concert on Dec. 14. The concert featured a mix of patriotic and classical tunes, and ended with a set of Christmas favorites.

The program was held in St. John's Episcopal Church in Waterbury. The church's superb acoustics enhanced a truly great performance. While admission was free, the public was encouraged to make contributions of household supplies, toiletries, cash, etc. to assist Safe Haven in aiding abused women and children. Conductor SSG Ralph Sherman said that the amount of goods contributed was significant and would be of immense benefit to the program.

The Band is planning a swing dance to benefit the Connecticut National Guard Foundation on March 11, 2005. Details will be published soon in the Guardian.

Foot Guard contributes to Operation Elf



Maj. Commandant Dennis Conroy announces the contribution of \$607 to Operation Elf, the program set up to help Connecticut National Guard service members and their families. The money that was contributed was collected as voluntary donations by the members of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard. In addition to the Foot Guard members' contributions, Greg O'Brien, who entertained the Foot Guard members and their families at a recent social event, also made a generous donation that he wanted included with the Foot Guard money. The money was presented by Conroy to Kim Hoffman of the National Guard Family Support Unit on Dec. 8. Sgt. 1st Class Barry Levy and Conroy hold the jar in which the contributions were collected. (Photo by Sgt. Kevin Cormack, 1st Co., GFG)

Horse Guard to represent state at Presidential Inauguration

CPL CHRISTINE JOHNSON
PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCO
2ND COMPANY GOVERNOR'S HORSE

The 2nd Company Governor's Horse Guard received an invitation to represent the State of Connecticut in the Presidential Inauguration scheduled for Jan. 20 in Washington, D.C. "Second Horse" accepted this honor to attend the presidential parade and will ride with pride in their traditional cavalry uniforms.

The troop must raise \$12,000 in four weeks to fund this four-day journey with horses and members including budgeting for travel, accommodations, transportation and meals. We are reaching out to state organizations, local communities and businesses asking for help by providing tax deductible donations to the Second Company Governor's Horse Guard "Inaugural Fund."

Donations will sponsor a team, trooper and horse, in the parade as well as help defer travel expenses. Any donation would be appreciated, no matter the amount. Please support the guard by sending donations payable to 2GHG and mail to 4 Wildlife Drive, Newtown, CT 06470, attention: Sgt. Karen Farrar "Inaugural Fund".

"Second Horse" is commanded by Maj. Janis Arena and headquartered on the grounds of the Old Fairfield Hills Hospital in Newtown, Conn. The unit is comprised of 40 active members who travel from across Connecticut for weekly duties, parade and community functions.

Chartered in 1808 by the Connecticut State Legislature the unit is one of the oldest, continuously serving cavalry units in the United States. Troopers devote more than 1000 hours of their time annually and are dedicated to serving the community.

The 2nd Company is on call for the state military department when needed and is involved with the Federal Bureau of Land Management "Wild Mustang Adoption Program." Troopers also patrol state park trails in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection and Connecticut Horse Council. The "Second Horse" is proud to uphold the history of the cavalry and remains dedicated to serving the citizen's of Connecticut. As always, the "Second Horse" is and remains "Ready to Serve."



Foot Guard participates in Fantasy Flight

On Saturday, Dec. 11 at 1:00 PM, members of the First Company Governor's Foot Guard escorted Santa and Mrs. Claus for the Fantasy Flight program sponsored by the Silver Liners Club, an association of former airline employees, at the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks. This year's event included over 100 children from the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. This is the tenth year the Foot Guard has participated in the Fantasy Flight program. Pictured are: Pvt. Russell Scull, Staff Sgt. Rich Gatewood, Sgt. Maj. Roger Conley, Cara Johnson of the Village for Families and Children (the Snow Queen), Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Sgt. Marty Klukas, Sgt. 1st Class Bill Leonard and Pvt. George Peterson. (Photo by Sgt. Kevin Cormack, 1st Co., GFG)

2nd Company GFG performs at Thomaston school

PFC. CHERRYLL LAFOND
2ND Co. GOVERNOR'S FOOT
GUARD

Several members of the 2nd Company Governor's Foot Guards field music performed a Veteran's Day program at The Black Rock Elementary School in Thomaston on Nov. 10. The members performed music from the Revolutionary War Era on Fife and Drums. The fife and the drum are musical instruments which date back to the prehistoric era. These instruments were used in various types and blended in nearly every culture and period of history.

The fife has a long tradition as a military signal instrument. The very first time these

instruments were used together in a form which today we would recognize as "fife & drum" was in Switzerland in the 15th Century. The fife & drum, however, developed into a folk tradition somewhere around 1876, the centennial of American independence.

Fife & drum corps march in parades and their own musters and tattoos, displaying their musical abilities. Some corps play within the folk tradition, which developed out of the 1870's, while others specifically recreate authentic music of the American Revolution, or the Civil War.

The principal of the school, Mr. Paul Johnson, explained to the student body that this type of music was used during the Revolutionary War. The students thoroughly



enjoyed the program. The 2nd Company Members who performed at the day's event were CW4 John DePastino, Sgt. Paddy Flynn, and Cpl. Robert Pettinicchi.



Ken Crowley of Crowley Automotive Group, and Congressman John Larson spend a moment together after both made donations to Operation E.L.F.

Outpouring of support Operation E.L.F. through

STORY BY SGT. 1ST CLASS DEBBI NEWTON
STATE PA NCO
PHOTOS BY SPC. JESSE J. STANLEY JR.
65TH PCH

Although the numbers of children and families affected by deployments in the Connecticut National Guard was lower this year than last, the response and outpouring of generosity to Operation E.L.F. from the state residents, organizations and businesses was greater.

"The response was much greater than last year," said Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Family Program Manager. "It was just tremendous and overwhelming."

Operation E.L.F. is a program started by Gov. M. Jodi Rell last year as a way for people in Connecticut to show their support for the families of deployed Soldiers. Then lieutenant governor, Rell wanted to funnel the various efforts to a central location and give the state

residents a place to go to help.

Because of her efforts, 155 families with 277 children benefitted from the state's generosity this year.

Even with the larger show of support, Hoffman said it the program was "easier to handle this year because we knew what to expect. We had a process in place this year. We just didn't know what to expect last year."

Handyperson Hotline also benefitted from Operation E.L.F. this year gaining eight new volunteers according to program administrator, Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier. The hotline is a place for families of deployed Soldiers and Airmen to call if they have a home emergency such as a malfunctioning furnace. A volunteer will go out and assist in alleviating the emergency.

"I just want to thank everybody who donated or volunteered for Operation E.L.F. a hundred-fold," said Hoffman.



The Crowley Auto Group collected and donated more than \$4,000 in toys and \$1,100 in phone cards for Operation E.L.F. far surpassing their donations from last year. The truck in the photo is the collection. Employees of Crowley spent a full afternoon transporting and setting up the toys and filled two cargo vans from floor to ceiling with the gifts for deployed Connecticut servicemen.

sends the roof

Operation E.L.F. Donations

- Toys: Upwards of tens of thousands
- Gift Cards: \$4,800
- Grocery Cards: \$25,000
- Phone Cards: More than 1 million minutes
- Restaurant Gift Cards: \$430
- Pharmacy Gift Cards: \$745
- Home Improvement Store Gift Cards: \$200
- 100 Oil Changes: \$2,000
- Entertainment Gift Cards: \$82
- Gas Cards: \$465
- Cash Donations: \$112,000 (To National Guard Foundation of Connecticut, Inc.)



The Crowley Auto Group, particularly Crowley Ford in Bristol, outdid themselves with their donation of toys, some of which are shown here.



Volunteers showed up at the Hartford Armory as early as 6 a.m. and stayed as late as 8 p.m. to help sort wrap and distribute the tens of thousands of toys donated by residents and businesses throughout Connecticut. The toys first had to be sorted by age, then by sex, wrapped and packaged for deliveries to families of deployed Connecticut servicemembers.



...o was provided to help show the enormity of the toy members.

Dozens of bicycles of all kinds and sizes were donated by residents and businesses as part of the Adopt-a-Family portion of Operation E.L.F. or just as random gifts. The bicycles were being delivered to the Hartford Armory right up to the deadline.

Bonuses announced in effort to increase Guard membership

MASTER SGT. BOB HASKELL
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

ARLINGTON, Va. (12/20/2004) — The chief of the National Guard Bureau is bearing gifts of gold to some Citizen-Soldiers in the Army National Guard during this holiday season.

The gold is in the form of substantial increases in enlistment and reenlistment bonuses that Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum announced at the Pentagon on Dec. 16. Some of the bonuses will be increased from \$5,000 to \$15,000. All but one are for enlisted personnel.

The increased bonuses for this fiscal year are earmarked for new Guard Soldiers who have never served in uniform, for people who join the Army Guard after serving on active duty, and for Guard Soldiers who agree to reenlist for three or six years.

Blum promised many Army Guard Soldiers he met with during recent trips to Iraq and Afghanistan that he would announce the increased bonuses in December and that they would be impressed.

Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers make up nearly 40 percent of the 148,000 troops in Iraq, and 42,000 Guard Soldiers are serving in Iraq and Kuwait, officials reported.

Another 8,200 are serving in Afghanistan. Blum said that approximately 100,000 Guard Soldiers have been on active duty at home

or abroad at any given time since terrorists attacked this country on Sept. 11, 2001.

The increased bonuses are an effort to improve the Army Guard's recruiting and retention efforts during the global war on terrorism and build the Army Guard back up to its authorized strength of 350,000 troops.

The bonus increases for fiscal year 2005 include:

- An increase in reenlistment and extension bonuses for enlisted people from \$5,000 to \$15,000.
- An increase from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for prior service enlisted people who enlist in the Army Guard for six years. That includes former active duty members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard who have fulfilled their military service obligation.
- An increase in enlistment bonuses from \$8,000 to \$10,000 for people without prior service who sign up for one of the Army Guard's "top 10" military occupational specialties, such as the infantry, military police and transportation.
- A \$6,000 bonus for newly commissioned

officers and warrant officers and for officers who have served on active duty.

- A \$2,000 bonus for enlisted Guard Soldiers who agree to be retrained for a military occupational specialty to meet the needs of the Army Guard provided the Soldiers are not receiving any other incentives.

Guard Soldiers will receive a lump sum for reenlisting. New Guard Soldiers joining the military for the first time and those with prior service will be given a 50-50 payment schedule.

Those who join the Army Guard's enlisted ranks who still have a military service obligation following their active duty tours will be eligible for a \$50 bonus for each remaining month of their obligation, it was explained. They can then receive a \$15,000 bonus if they reenlist in the Guard.

The eligibility for receiving reenlistment bonuses has been extended by two years. Guard Soldiers previously could not receive a bonus after 14 years of service. They are now eligible for up to 16 years.

Blum has also promised to double the Student Loan Repayment Program – to \$20,000 – for non-prior service people who have existing loans when they enlist.

The Army Guard will also offer Montgomery GI Bill Kickers of between \$200 and \$350 per month to non-prior service people who are enrolled in colleges or vocational schools provided they are already receiving GI Bill benefits.

"We're in a more difficult recruiting environment," Blum told news reporters. "There's no question that when you have a sustained ground combat operation going that the Guard's participating in, that makes recruiting more difficult."

The Army Guard is adding 1,400 recruiters to its nationwide recruiting force – increasing it from 2,700 to 4,100 – over the next three months, Blum explained.



The Guard Bureau chief also said the Guard will change its recruiting message to more accurately reflect the fact that many Citizen-Soldiers are now pulling tours of duty overseas for at least a year.

"We are correcting, frankly, some of our recruiting themes and slogans to reflect the reality of today," Blum told The Washington Post. "We're not talking about one weekend a month and two weeks a year and college tuition. We're talking about service to the nation."

People interested in more information about the increased bonuses can call their local Army National Guard recruiters.


OFFICERS CLUB OF CONNECTICUT Hartford Armory *(860)249-3634 January 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sat., Jan 22 Bushnell Nite " (6 PM) and Theater \$85. Call Ginie Scheller (860) 282- 0778. (Dinner only \$25)			<i>The Overcoat</i> Dinner			1 New Year's Day
2	3	4 House Democrats 730PM UConn Women v Providence	5 SESSION OPENS House Republicans Bkfst Red Hat Lunch AIA Cocktail Party 7 UConn v BC fox	6 830 AM NGA CT Legislative Bkfst	7	8 NG DRILL 12 N UConn Men v Georgetown 2PM UConn Women v Tenn CBS
9 NG DRILL	10 5 - 6:30 PM Ct Credit Union 230 PM House Committee 10 PM UConn Men v Oklahoma	11	12 7 PM UConn Wom v Notre Dame	13	14	15
16	17 Martin Luther King, HOLIDAY Club Closed 5 UConn W v Tenn ESPN 2 7 UConn V Seton H ESPN	18	19	20 5 - 7 AFL-CIO Cocktail Part 530 Pm Bd of Gov Mtg	21	22 6PM Club Nite at Bushnell "Overcoat" Dinner & Musical
23	24 6 PM Annual Meeting O'Club Buffet \$6	25 7 PM UConn M vs W Virginia Ch 20	26 7PM UConn W at Pittsburgh CPTV	27	28 3PM Spanos - D'Amico promotion - wet-down 5 PM Duncan Copcktail Party	29
30 7PM UConn Women v Notre Dame ESPN 2	31	O'Club open daily for Lunch 1130 - 2 PM Bar & Lounge open at Lunch and 4PM - Close Superbowl Sunday Feb6 4PM at the O'Club				

OFFICERS CLUB OF CONNECTICUT
Hartford Armory (860) 249 - 3634
PRESENTS

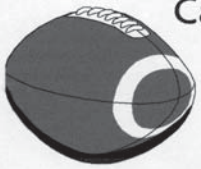


SUPER BOWL SUNDAY
February 6, 2005

Watch the Games on
Giant Plasma TVs (5 Ft wide)
\$20 per person
pre-game snacks
half time buffet



Cash Bar (Happy Hour Prices)
(You can smoke in the Bar)
Call for reservations (100 Tickets)
860-249-3634
MG (ret) Jim Throwe
CSM (ret) Bob Moeller



Bush signs Intelligence Reform Bill into law

KATHLEEN T. RHEM
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

President Bush signed into law a bill designed to improve coordination and effectiveness among the nation's various intelligence networks.

Bush called the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 the "most dramatic reform of our nation's intelligence capabilities since President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947."

"Under this new law, our vast intelligence enterprise will become more unified, coordinated and effective," Bush said in remarks before signing the bill at the Mellon Auditorium here. "It will enable us to better do our duty, which is to protect the American people."

The new law creates the position of director of national intelligence, an individual to be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Congress. The DNI will "lead a unified intelligence community and will serve as the principal adviser to the president on intelligence matters," Bush said, though he did not announce a candidate for the job.

This individual will also control the budgets of U.S. intelligence agencies, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

Bush reassured everyone that "the new law will preserve the existing chain of command and leave all our intelligence agencies, organizations and offices in their current departments."

"Our military commanders will continue to have quick access to the intelligence they

need to achieve victory on the battlefield," the president noted.

Bush said the new legislation is needed to protect the country as America faces new threats of "stateless networks" and "killers who hide in our own cities."

Truman created the Defense Department, the CIA and the National Security Council in the face of the Cold War, "to defend the Free World from an armed empire bent on conquest," Bush said.

Now, the government is adapting to defeat other threats, he noted. Following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Bush created the Department of Homeland Security. He called the changes in the law signed today a continuation of the "essential reorganization of our government."

This legislation had strong support from families of those killed in the Sept. 11 attacks, and the bipartisan commission investigating the attacks had recommended creation of a national intelligence director.

"I particularly want to thank the 9/11 commission, ... (and) pay my respects and offer our gratitude to the family members of the victims of September the 11th," Bush said. "Thank you for working hard on this issue. Thank you for remembering your loved ones."

He said the reforms in the law have a single goal: "to ensure that the people in government responsible for defending America have the best possible information to make the best possible decisions."

"The men and women of our intelligence community give America their very best every day," Bush said. "And in return, we owe them our full support."



President George W. Bush speaks during the signing ceremony of S. 2845, The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, in Washington, D.C., Dec. 17, 2004. "Under this new law, our vast intelligence enterprise will become more unified, coordinated and effective. It will enable us to better do our duty, which is to protect the American people," said the President. (White House photo)



President George W. Bush talks with Senators Bill Frist, R-Tenn., right and Joe Lieberman, D-Conn., during the signing ceremony of S. 2845, The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. (White House photo)

State of the State address

From Page 1



State legislators listen to one of several briefings on Connecticut's National Guard and veterans' affairs during an NGACT-sponsored breakfast. (Photo by Pfc. Joseph Brooks, 65th PCH)

Rell said the state would continue to prevail, if the legislature works together, "with steadfastness of purpose and without the self-imposed shackles of convention and partisan politics."

"For this is our moment. This is our time. We have been called to leadership at a special time in history and we cannot, we must not, turn away from our responsibilities."

She talked about the trust they must earn back from the public, and the hard work that lay ahead. She warned them it would not be easy.

"I have been working too hard to clean up too many policy and ethical problems since becoming governor," she said. "I have attended far too many funerals of our brave young Soldiers. I have struggled through sleepless nights and heard the anguish of shattered families as I have considered the case of Michael Ross. (Pending execution on death row.) I have been unex[pectedly] confronted with my own mortality as I was told I had cancer. Yes, I am looking through different eyes now. Eyes more focused on what is truly important, what is truly

necessary. Partisan posturing and political sniping are not. What is important and is necessary is to solve long-standing social, economic and educational problems."

She again warned that this would not be easy. That difficult decisions would have to be made, to include budget decisions. Debate and careful consideration would have to be accomplished. She said the budget she would present in the next month would contain some difficult choices and that some of her proposals were bold.

She urged the legislature to join her in being bold and in seeing things through different eyes.

"we've been talking about reform for months - now is the time to do it!" she said.

And many of her colleagues took her advice and decided to see things through different eyes.

Braving the toughest winter storm of the season, several state representatives, senators and legislative aides attended a legislative breakfast the next morning hosted by the National Guard Association of Connecticut.

The purpose of the breakfast was to educate legislators on what the Guard does, the issues facing it, it's Soldiers, Airmen, families and retirees, and how they can help through passage of legislation that will be proposed by the Connecticut Military Department and the Adjutant General of the Connecticut National Guard, Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno.

In addition to the briefing given by Cugno, attendees also received briefings from Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs Linda Schwartz, Commissioner of Homeland Security Skip Thomas, and the commander of Connecticut's new 14th Civil Support Team, Maj. Joseph Danao.

With the legislative session having just opened, it was an opportunity to educate some of the newly elected leaders, and to re-educate some of the seasoned veterans as to the capabilities of, and problems facing, the National Guard and it's extended family. As Cugno told the attendees, "This is not your father's Army! Things have changed. Times have changed. And we need your help."

Military Matters



**Connecticut
National Guard
Soldier-Airman
Support Center**

Supporting Guard Members
And Their Families

Procedures for using the Work Number (TNI- 04-30)

1. The following procedures should be used when accessing The Work Number for employment and income verification. Please give this information widest dissemination.

2. Employees may provide information to the verifier based on one of two options: employment verification only or employment and salary information.

Procedures for Proof of Employment Only

– Give the verifier the following information:

- Your Social Security Number
- DFAS Code 10365
- The Work Number access options for verifiers:
 - Option A: www.theworknumber.com or
 - Option B: Telephone number 1-800-367-5690

Procedures for Proof of Employment plus Income – Give the verifier the following information:

- Your Social Security Number
- DFAS Code 10365
- Your Salary Key (see instructions below for obtaining this)

- The Work Number access options for verifiers:

- Option A: www.theworknumber.com or
- Option B: Telephone number 1-800-367-5690

3. To provide the verifier with your proof of income, you must first obtain a salary key.

Instructions on Obtaining a Salary Key

- The Work Number access options for employees:

- Option A: www.theworknumber.com or
- Option B: Telephone number 1-800-367-2884

- DFAS Code 10365
- Your Social Security Number
- Enter your 4 digit PIN (month and day of your birthday: MMDD)
- You will be given a Salary Key.

Note: You may obtain 3 Salary Keys at one time. Once you give a Salary Key to a verifier, it may not be used again.

4. If you have additional questions please contact the Personnel Systems Management Division (NGB-TN-I).

For more information on these or other programs, contact the HRO Soldier Airman Service Center in Newington at (860) 878-6713



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY & AIR FORCE
CONNECTICUT ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE
SOLDIER-AIRMAN SUPPORT CENTER
555 WILLARD AVENUE, BLDG 2W
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111-2631

CTNG-HR

15 December 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR Connecticut National Guard Technicians

SUBJECT: Department of Defense National Security System (NSPS)

This week, Navy Secretary Gordon England announced the organizations identified for Spiral One, the first group of Department of Defense activities that will implement the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). While this organization won't be a part of Spiral One, we can all take pride in what has been accomplished thus far and share in the excitement of what lies ahead.

Since the law authorizing NSPS was signed on November 24, 2003, the Department has been working diligently to create a modern, flexible and streamlined personnel system to more effectively and efficiently meet DoD's national security mission. This effort, based on extensive input from employees, unions and other DoD stakeholders is nearing completion. Very soon, the NSPS enabling regulations will be published in the Federal Register for public comment and formal collaboration with employee representatives. Once this process is completed, the Spiral One implementation will begin with the first conversions scheduled to occur as early as July 2005 timeframe. Furthermore, the Labor Relations system will be implemented across the entire Department as early as July 2005.

NSPS represents a unique opportunity to attract, retain, reward, and grow a civilian workforce to meet the demands and missions of the Department in the twenty-first century.

Now more than ever, we need to demonstrate our support of those organizations and employees who through their participation in Spiral One are charting the course for NSPS. Their efforts on behalf of NSPS will pave the way for our own implementation.

Over the coming months the NSPS program offices will be sponsoring a variety of informational forums and activities. These sessions are designed to build our comfort level about the new system and assist us in making a successful transition to NSPS when our time comes to implement. Our conversion date isn't that far off, and I encourage you to take advantage of every opportunity to learn about the system, talk to your friends and co-workers and get to know the dynamics of NSPS. The NSPS website will continue to offer up to date information on Spiral One and other aspects of NSPS as the system progresses.

Throughout its development, NSPS has been a broad based, participative process. There will continue to be opportunities for you to get involved, share your thoughts and offer your comments and insights on how NSPS implementation is affecting you and this organization.

This truly is an historic occasion – one that literally has the potential of changing the entire face of civilian personnel. NSPS is a system that's good for the Department. Working together, we can achieve the Department's goal of creating a modern, flexible and agile human resource system that retains the enduring values of merit principles and veterans' preference. This is good news for all of us and I am counting on your support and participation.

FOR THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

/// SIGNED ///

MICHAEL A. VASILE
Lieutenant Colonel, EN, CTARNG
Director, Human Resources

Visit the
Connecticut Guardian
online at www.ct.ngb.army.mil

Education Essentials: *Infantry School partners with Webster University*

MELISSA HOUSE
THE BAYONET

Representatives from the Infantry School and Webster University signed an agreement Dec. 8 designed to help level the playing field between captains and their civilian counterparts.

The agreement establishes a cooperative master's degree program and provides Infantry Captains Career Course graduates the opportunity to complete a degree with the university through shared academic credits. Students can pursue a master of business administration, master of arts in human-resources development or a master of arts in management and leadership.

After evaluating both the ICCC and Webster University curricula to ensure educational quality and comparability,

administrators at both institutions determined ICCC graduates could receive nine credits toward the MBA and 12 credits toward the two MA degrees. The credit hours awarded are from qualitative analysis and decision making, organizational behavior and leadership.

The process began in early September, said Skip Rey, an instructional-systems specialist in the Directorate of Operations and Training, when he contacted the university and got information

Less than six weeks later, Webster representative Ralph Southard, the senior director for cooperative degree programs, met with Col. John Carmichael, the director of operations and training, to present the program.

Rey said Southard sent a draft memorandum

of agreement two weeks later. Rey then sent the ICCC program of instruction to Southard so he could convert it and award Webster credit hours.

ICCC students will get information on the cooperative program during their in-brief, Rey said.

Graduates can complete their degree by enrolling at a Webster University campus at their subsequent duty assignment or by enrolling in their distance-learning program.

Webster has seven international campuses and 68 campuses in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

And the agreement applies to graduates of the previous Infantry Officer Advanced Course and past graduates of ICCC, said Joe Staudenraus, chief of the DOT's

Training Development Branch.

Staudenraus had worked on a similar agreement for the U.S. Army Soldier Support Institute at Fort Jackson, S.C., in 2001.

At the Dec. 8 signing ceremony, Randy Wright, Webster's associate vice president for academic affairs and director of military programs, told Infantry Center assistant commandant Col. James Yarbrough he had a phone call to make as soon as he walked out the door. He had captains at Fort Bragg who were waiting for the news that the agreement had been signed so they could enroll.

"This program gives the captains a head start on earning their master's degree," Rey said. "It's all about helping Soldiers."

For more information, visit www.webster.edu or the Warrior University link at www.benning.army.mil.



CHIEF MASTER SGT.
WANDA WAWRUCK

Enlisted Update

Feedback, Recognition, Retention = Teamwork

Happy New Year! I hope 2005 has found you healthy as we begin a new year exactly as we left the last one....very busy. My best wishes for a safe and speedy return to our many members who have been deployed over the holidays.

While I'm out and about discussing issues with our Airmen, the topics that always seem to surface are: "I never get any feedback from my boss" or "I wish my boss would just say thank you occasionally."

With that said, I'd like to focus this article on how feedback, recognition, and retention equate back to our grass roots of teamwork.

For those who have spent time in an active service prior to joining the Guard, feedback was a standard part of your routine. Whether feedback was performed periodically, on the spot or through a formal setting with your immediate supervisor, you always knew three things: First, how you were doing; Second, where you need to be; and Third, how you and your supervisor are going to get you there.

Sounds pretty simple...right? Well it is.

No matter what time of the year you and your supervisor determine is the best to perform this process, you know that at least once a year, you will have a one-on-one discussion with your supervisor to cover at least the three areas I mentioned above.

Everyone deserves and is entitled to a formal feedback session on exactly where they stand and how they can improve. If you have not received a formal feedback session over the course of the year, I encourage you to respectfully request one from your supervisor.

So how does feedback coincide with recognition?

Continuous feedback through formal and informal sessions directly impacts the gathering of information thus resulting in recognition. It's a no-brainer to pat someone on the back and thank them for a job well done, but some tasks deserve additional credit such as a State or Federal award. There are times we lose sight of what our people are involved in. Continuous interaction with our members serves two purposes: first, we stay connected to the possible stressors in their lives, and second, it provides additional opportunities to mentor them.

As you know, recognition comes in many forms and can be accomplished with

minimal effort. Let me remind you that you do not have to directly supervise an individual to recognize his or her efforts; anyone may write a letter of appreciation, State or Federal award. Using the simple concept of feedback and recognition leads to retention of our most valuable resource....our people.

Overall, in the National Guard, we have not retained many future leaders due to the lack of feedback and recognition. In answering the call, the Enlisted Field Advisory Council adopted some aspects of the Air Force Performance Feedback System. In addition, more focus was placed on recognition programs and the development of new areas to reward our people.

We cannot afford to lose our organization's most valuable resource...our people. When you take a look at our organization, there's an obvious gap between our apprentice and craftsman levels. There are several indicators that relate to losing a specialist, however, many can be directly attributed to the lack of feedback and recognition. The use of the programs noted above can rectify this quickly.

There is no doubt that a well-oiled machine works smoother when all the mechanisms are in tip top shape and lubricated correctly. Feedback and recognition for our troops is like oil to a well-tuned engine and they equal one word...TEAMWORK.

We cannot effectively launch aircraft or deploy troops if we don't have teamwork. Continuous feedback and recognizing a job well done leads to productive members who remain in our organization.

Our survival is about doing what's right all the time and that is taking care of our people. Take a step down memory lane during your initial basic training. You arrived as an individual and departed as part of a team that now defends our state and our great nation. How did we get there? We got there through our instructor's continuous feedback and recognition that led to our own decision to remain a part of today's armed service. Stay a part of our winning team by developing teamwork through honest feedback and recognition for a job well done.

I look forward to seeing everyone throughout the new year and hearing how our team is improving through continuous feedback and recognition.

Guard Voices

Searching for P.O.W.s

The Sampson Air Force Base Veterans Association, Inc. is searching for all former Prisoners of War (POWs), Missing in Action (MIA) or dependants, family or friends of deceased POWs and MIAs.

The Sampson Air Force Base Association, Inc. wants to honor and record each of these POWs and MIAs in our organization.

Names can be submitted to: 3650th Basic Military Training Wing, (1950-1956) for inclusion in the Honor Roll. Send names to Chip Phillips, P.O. Box 331, Williamsville, N.Y. 14231-0331.

The Sampson Air Force Base Veterans Association is a non-profit, volunteer

association consisting mainly of USAF veterans who served at the base or who received basic training there. There are approximately 3,000 members in the association.

The group was established in September 1994. Sampson Air Force Base Veterans Association holds annual reunions at Sampson State Park each year and sponsors a number of regional events and gatherings in other areas of the United States.

ALLEN H. GOLDBLATT
MEMBER 134

Up Front with the Adjutant General

From Page 22

support the needs of our military family.

As you know the National Guard and Organized Militia consists of Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen who serve our Nation and State with unparalleled professionalism.

The National Guard deploys on numerous contingency operations all over the world in support of the national defense requirements.

Often, these deployments create difficult financial situations for Guard members and their families.

During their time of need, they may be eligible for assistance from the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, Inc.

The Connecticut National Guard Foundation is an organization established to take care of our own. It is a nonprofit corporation organized for the purpose of providing temporary financial assistance for Connecticut National Guard and Organized

Militia members, and families who are in need. The fund was established to provide benefits such as clothing, food, medical and surgical aid, and general care and relief. The New Year marks the beginning of the Foundation's annual fund raising campaign. Corporate and individual contributions are welcome. Volunteers are needed. For more information please call (860) 241-1550.

Each of you and your family has paid a personal price. To all of you currently deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism and to your loved ones this holiday season, know that my heart and prayers are with each of you and with your families who have also sacrifice.

Keep your head in the game, remain focused, and remain vigilant. I promise you continued leadership that does the same.

God bless you and God bless America.

Handyperson Hotline

Calling all soldiers and airmen, retirees or spouses.

Volunteer to donate some of your time and expertise to the CTNG Family Program's Handyperson Center. If you are a tradesman or an all around handyperson or a laborer, the Handyperson Center is looking for you!

E-mail your name, phone number skill, status (active, retired, spouse) and hometown to Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier at toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil or call (860) 209-0770.

The Handyperson Hotline is designed to reduce the stressors on the families of deployed soldiers and airmen by having everyday household problems diagnosed and repaired or referred to competent businesses at no cost for labor.

The program is also designed to get seasonal chores such as window air conditioners installed/removed, pools opened/closed, leaves removed, items brought to the dump and so on.

All of this can be performed by fellow Guardsmen, retirees or spouses of Guardsmen who are willing to donate their time and expertise to this program.

Here's how the program works:

A deployed family member calls the Handyperson Hotline with a clogged drain.

The Hotline manager contacts a plumber from the Handyperson Database who will contact the family member and attempt to walk the person through correcting the problem (if possible.)

If not corrected, the Hotline will dispatch a qualified person (fellow Guardsman) to the house to correct the problem.

It is designed to give the deployed family somewhere to turn to keep the home operating smoothly without having to pay to get things done around the house that were normally done by the deployed soldier or airman.

To volunteer or for more information, call (860) 209-0770 today.

Homefront

In defense of Connecticut’s children: *Reflections on Afghanistan*

1ST L. CHRISTOPHER D. MORGAN
DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION ADMINISTRATOR

In an impassioned speech two days after his inauguration as Afghanistan’s first popularly elected leader, Hamid Karzai suggested Taliban militants were funding their stubborn insurgency with drug profits and warned elders and officials from across the country to avert a new disaster. Hamid Karzai and the citizens of the United States have cause for concern.

According to a November 19th press release from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the annual U.S. Government estimate for opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is complete and shows that approximately 206,700 hectares of poppy were cultivated during the crop season in 2004.

Current cultivation levels equate to a potential production of 4,950 metric tons of opium.

This represents a 239 percent increase in the poppy crop and a 73 percent increase in potential opium production over 2003 estimates. Karzai’s speech opened a conference on U.S.-sponsored plans to crack down on a trade already supplying most of the world’s opium and heroin and which the United Nations says is turning the impoverished country into a “narco-state.”

“Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is a major problem, but Afghanistan is now developing the institutional foundations necessary to drive out narcotics cultivation and trafficking,” said John Walters, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

“Attacking the drug trade is a key step toward establishing the stability and freedom that are the aspiration of every Afghan man and woman. In the world’s ‘newest democracy,’ a nation increasingly governed by laws, there is simply no place for drug

traffickers.”

To date, little Afghan heroin has ended up on U.S. streets, with most Afghan heroin marketed to neighboring countries and Europe,” added Walters. “Additionally, by fostering corruption and undermining the rule of law, a resurgent drug trade threatens what the Afghans have achieved.”

The United States is working closely with the United Kingdom, which is the lead nation coordinating international counternarcotics assistance to the Afghan Government.

The United States will do its part to help by giving Afghan farmers real economic alternatives, supporting the Afghans to eradicate poppy fields, working side-by-side with the Afghans to strengthen their drug law enforcement, and helping them to establish interdiction programs.

The United States is also working with our Afghan counterparts to build civic

institutions and raise public awareness about the serious harm drugs inflict.

It may seem cliché but reflecting on Afghanistan at this time of year helps to put into perspective our own struggles in the “War On Drugs.”

We certainly are not the world’s newest democracy but the fabric that makes up our Nation is nevertheless threatened by the very same “Narco-Terrorists” that cloud Afghanistan’s future.

As we move into this new year of hope and opportunity, we in the counterdrug community are resolute in protecting the aspirations of freedom and stability of our citizens as we wage our ongoing battle against drugs. If you have any questions about other Drug Free events or Educational & Leadership Programs please call @860-493-2724 and ask for 1st Lt. Christopher Morgan.

Military W-2s make it easier to determine tax-credit eligibility

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

The 2004 W-2 forms for military members will now report pay earned while serving in combat zone tax-exclusion areas.

This information will allow members to better determine their eligibility for two credits to their federal income tax payments, the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, officials said.

The combat zone pay information will be listed separately in Block 14 of the member’s W-2 form and will not be included with taxable wage information.

EITC and CTC qualifications are based on gross income, which includes pay earned while

in a tax-exclusion area. The addition of this information on 2004 W-2s will help determine whether a member meets the IRS requirements for EITC and CTC and which method of computing taxes is most advantageous to each member’s individual situation.

The 2004 W-2s will be available in mid-to-late January, and servicemembers can access their W-2s on the Defense Finance and Accounting Service’s on-line “myPay” system.

Officials recommend servicemembers contact their unit tax advisors for more information on the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, or other tax issues.

(From a Defense Finance and Accounting Service news release.)

a Control number				OMB No. 0000-0000		
b Employer Identification number 00-0000000		d Employee's social security number 000-00-0000		1 Wages, tips, other compensation 0000.00	2 Federal income tax withheld 000.00	
c Employer's name, address, and zip code DFAS, ATTN: DFASIN/ADIMB 8899 EAST 56TH STREET INDIANAPOLIS IN 46249-2410				3 Social security wages 0000.00	4 Social security tax withheld 000.00	
				5 Medicare wages and tips 0000.00	6 Medicare tax withheld 000.00	
				7 Social security tips	8 Allocated tips	
e Employee's name, address, and zip code G. I. Joe 0000 Main Street Anywhere, USA 00000-0000				9 Advance EIC payment	10 Dependent care benefits	
				12 See Instrs. for box 12	14 See Instrs. for box 14 Q 0000.00 This block will include the combat area exclusion amount	
				13 <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory employee <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Third party sick pay		
15 State AN	Employer's state I.D. no 00000000000	16 State wages, tips, etc 0000.00	17 State income tax 000.00	18 Local wages, tips, etc	19 Local income tax	20 Locality name
15 State	Employer's state I.D. no	16 State wages, tips, etc	17 State income tax	18 Local wages, tips, etc	19 Local income tax	20 Locality name

Form

Wage and Tax Statement

W-2 2004

Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service

Copy 2 To Be Filed With Employee's State, City, or Local Income Tax Return

Some National Guard and Reserve members, family members now eligible for ‘Early’ TRICARE benefit

TRICARE PRESS RELEASE

Under the National Defense Authorization Act and the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2004, members of the National Guard and Reserve (collectively known as the Reserve Component, or RC) who are issued delayed-effective-date active duty orders for more than 30 days in support of a contingency operation, are now eligible for “early” TRICARE medical and dental benefits beginning on the latter of either: (a) the date their orders were issued or (b) 90 days before the member reported to active duty.

According to this law, the 2004 Temporary Reserve Health Benefit Program is in effect November 6, 2003, to December 31, 2004, the date the temporary benefit ends.

The Department of Defense implemented this temporary program on July 20, 2004. RC members and eligible family members who have been “saving their receipts” awaiting implementation of this program may now submit claims to their regional www.tricare.osd.mil/claims TRICARE Claims Processor to apply for reimbursement for medical expenses incurred during their period of early eligibility.

TRICARE Eligibility for RC Members and Family Members

In order to be eligible for this early TRICARE benefit, RC members and family members must be enrolled in the www.tricare.osd.mil/Factsheets/viewfactsheet Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). The member’s Service personnel office is responsible for determining the member’s eligibility for the early TRICARE benefit.

The TRICARE Management Activity will

send a one-time letter to eligible RC members affected by this temporary benefit from November 6, 2003 through July 31, 2004.

After that time, the Services will notify and advise eligible RC members of their TRICARE medical and dental benefits when their delayed-effective-date orders are issued.

RC members who believe they are eligible for the early TRICARE benefit and have not received a letter may verify their eligibility through the secure Guard and Reserve Web portal Web site.

For assistance with an eligibility problem, contact the Service Point of Contact (listed below and on the Web at www.tricare.osd.mil/reserve/reservepoc.cfm).

RC members (and their family members) who are issued a delayed-effective-date active duty order that is cancelled prior to the member reporting for active duty are not covered by the Uniformed Services Employment Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) protections pertaining to reinstatement in an employer-sponsored health plan.

RC Members and their family members are strongly encouraged to consider retaining their employer’s health plan coverage until the RC member actually reports for active duty, at which time the RC member and family members are fully covered by USERRA. The RC member and their family members will lose TRICARE eligibility upon the date the activation orders are cancelled.

The TRICARE Benefit for RC Members

RC members will not be enrolled into TRICARE Prime until they reach their final duty station location. Upon arrival, they will follow guidance at their final duty station regarding enrollment into one of the TRICARE Prime programs. If they are released earlier, or their orders are cancelled,

no enrollment into TRICARE Prime will occur.

RC members inside the 50 United States, who are registered in DEERS but are not enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR) programs, receive health services in the same manner as any non-enrolled active duty service member at a military treatment facility (MTF) or dental treatment facility (DTF), or by reimbursement through supplemental care rules.

Prior to departing their mobilization site, RC members will be provided the telephone number of the regional TRICARE contractor at their next duty station and instructed to contact the regional contractor upon arrival for guidance on how to enroll in the TRICARE program.

RC members outside the 50 United States, who are registered in DEERS but are not enrolled in one of the TRICARE Prime programs available overseas, receive health services at an MTF or DTF, or by reimbursement through supplemental care rules or appropriate overseas programs (i.e., TRICARE Global Remote Overseas for urgent/emergency care).

The TRICARE Benefit for Family Members

When RC sponsors become eligible for TRICARE benefits as described above, their DEERS-eligible family members become eligible for care in MTFs on a space-available basis and coverage under TRICARE Standard/Extra.

Once RC family members become eligible in DEERS, they may enroll in TRICARE Prime or the TRICARE Prime Remote for Active Duty Family Members (TPRADFM) program, depending on their

residence. There are no enrollment fees for RC family members to enroll in TRICARE Prime or the TPRADFM program.

To enroll in the TPRADFM program, the residential address for the RC member and family members must be the same one listed in DEERS.

Family members must also have resided with their RC member before the member departed for his/her duty station, mobilization site, or deployment location and the family member must continue to reside in the TPR location.

To enroll in TRICARE Prime or TPR, or for additional information, beneficiaries may contact or visit the local TRICARE service center or regional beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinators (BCAC) for assistance.

For the locations of the nearest TRICARE service center and BCACs, beneficiaries may click on the map on the home page of the TRICARE Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/> www.tricare.osd.mil, or call (888) DoD-CARE, (888) 363-2273.

DEERS Eligibility Assistance

RC members with problems regarding their eligibility for the early TRICARE benefit may contact their Service personnel office provided below for assistance.

Army National Guard
DEERS/RAPIDS PROJECT OFFICER
National Guard Bureau (ARNG-ARP)
DSN: 327-4189
Commercial: (703) 607-4189
Fax: (703) 607-7184
Air National Guard
ANG/DPFO - DEERS/RAPIDS Project Officer, ANG/DPFOC
DSN: 327-1239
Commercial: (703) 607-1239
Comm. Fax: (703) 327-0033

COMMISSARY & EXCHANGE DIRECTORY

Here is a current directory of area commissaries and exchanges along with their phone numbers. Always call ahead to verify hours as they may change without notice. A valid i.d. card is necessary to use these facilities. Contact your unit administrator if you or your dependants need a card. If you have trouble, contact the State Family Program Office at 1-800-858-2677.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD East Granby TUESDAY – FRIDAY: 10:00 – 5:00 SATURDAY: 10:00 – 4:00 SUNDAY & MONDAY: Closed UTAs: Open Saturday & Sunday: 10:00 – 5:00 Phone: (860) 653-6994	CAMP ROWLAND POST EXCHANGE MONDAY: Closed TUESDAY – SATURDAY: 10:00 – 5:00 SUNDAY: 10:00 – 4:00 Phone: (860) 739-9672 COAST GUARD STATION 120 Woodward Avenue New Haven, CT MONDAY – FRIDAY: 9:00 – 4:30 SATURDAY: 9:00 – 2:00 SUNDAY: Closed Phone: (203) 468-2712	WEST POINT, NEW YORK Exchange Hours: SATURDAY – WEDNESDAY: 10:00 – 6:00 THURSDAY & FRIDAY: 10:00 – 7:00 Phone: (914) 446-5406 Commissary Hours: MONDAY: Closed TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY: 10:00 – 6:00 THURSDAY: 10:00 – 7:00 FRIDAY: 10:00 – 6:00 SATURDAY: 9:00 – 5:00 SUNDAY: 11:00 – 5:00	SUB BASE, NEW LONDON Exchange Hours: MON., TUES., WED., FRI.: 9:00 – 6:00 THURSDAY: 9:00 – 7:00 SATURDAY & SUNDAY: 9:00 – 5:00 HOLIDAYS: 9:00 – 4:00 Phone: (860) 694-3811 Commissary Hours: MONDAY: Closed TUE., WED. & FRI.: 9:00 – 6:00 THURSDAY: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m. SATURDAY: 8:00 – 5:00 SUNDAY: 10:00 – 5:00	WESTOVER AIR FORCE BASE Chicopee, Mass. MONDAY – FRIDAY: 10:00 – 5:00 SATURDAY: 10:00- 5:00 SUNDAY: 11:00 – 5:00 Phone: (413) 593-5583 COAST GUARD ACADEMY New London MONDAY – FRIDAY: 9:00 – 5:00 SATURDAY: 9:00 – 3:00 SUNDAY: Closed Phone: (860) 444-8488
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Guarding Your Rights

Legal Affairs: *Substance abuse and your rights*

CAPT. TIMOTHY TOMCHO
JAG OFFICE

Army Regulation 600-85, Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), governs Army policy relevant to Alcohol and drug usage. The Army policy on drug abuse is zero tolerance. As stated by André D. Hollis, deputy assistant secretary of defense for counternarcotics, "Any illegal drug use is incompatible with military service."

All Soldiers who are identified to have used illegal drugs will be processed for discharge.

Only two exceptions to the discharge policy exist. Separation proceedings will not be initiated if (1) charges have been referred to a court-martial empowered to adjudge a punitive discharge, or (2) drug use is discovered through self-referral.

All Soldiers should be familiar with the process used to identify illegal drug usage. The Army utilizes urinalysis, which is a form of inspection.

Urinalysis is a highly developed process involving the testing of urine sample to detect substances. If testing indicates that the urine sample contains evidence of illegal drugs, it is retested.

Ultimately, the process is designed to ensure that soldiers who test positive for

the use of controlled substances have ingested the identified substances. The "science" is, essentially absolute.

The laboratory performs the urinalysis notifies the Alcohol and Drug Control Officer (ADCO) of the findings. The ADCO, in turn, notifies the commanders of the Soldiers who have been identified as having used illegal drugs. The Commander of the Soldier then notifies the Soldier of the findings. Commanders notify the Soldier and initiate the separation processing.

The Connecticut National Guard processes separations of Soldiers who have been identified as drug abusers in accordance with Army Regulation 135-178, "Enlisted Administrative Separations."

This regulation provides for the efficient administrative discharge of Soldiers.

If a Soldier has six or more years of service, the Soldier is afforded the opportunity to have his or her case heard by a board of officers who will make findings and recommendations to the separation authority (The Adjutant General).

Any Soldier who is being separated with the characterization of service as "under other than honorable conditions" is also provided the opportunity to have the case heard by a board of officers. At the boards,

Soldiers are afforded the right to appointed legal counsel, the right to make statements and the right to call witnesses.



ASAP also requires commanders to initiate separation actions for certain alcohol-related misconduct. Specifically, commanders must initiate and process to the separation authority an administrative separation action for misconduct if a Soldier is involved in two serious incidents of alcohol related misconduct in a year, such as drunk on duty or operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated. In addition, ASAP requires the first general officer in the chain of command or the installation commander to specifically authorize alcohol consumption during duty hours at the work place.

It is important that all Soldiers understand the implication of illegal drug usage and irresponsible alcohol consumption. In this regard, there is little room for error.

This article is not intended as and does not constitute legal advice. Specific legal issues are unique to each person and factual situation. Persons with legal issues are encouraged to personally consult an attorney.

NGACT: Working for you



BILL CUSACK
PRESIDENT

It has been a very busy couple of months for NGACT!

In November, we held a fundraiser for Operation E.L.F. that netted \$560 for the Connecticut National Guard Family Program to use to buy toys for the children of our deployed Guardsmen. Thank you all for your support of an event we put together in a matter of days.

Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, adjutant general, attended our last executive board meeting to share his pledge of commitment to NGACT and NGACT's membership drive with us. It was a very productive meeting and we look forward to working with the general in the coming months as the Military Department legislative proposals are sent across the street to the state legislature.

We have hosted a Legislative Breakfast at the Officers' Club on Jan. 6, the day after the Connecticut General Assembly convened for the 2005 Session. Despite a nasty winter storm that morning, we had a significant turnout of state representatives, senators and legislative aides who learned more about the National Guard and the state's veterans from Maj. Gen. Cugno, Department of Veterans' Affairs Commissioner Linda Schwartz, Homeland Security Commissioner Skip Thomas and the 14th Civil Support Team Commander, Maj. Joe Danao.

And, we have no end in sight for our busy season! We are hosting a Retirees' Luncheon on Jan. 18 to bring them up to speed on the state of the Connecticut National Guard. We also will once again be hosting the EANGUS Area 1 Caucus in March as well as our own Annual Conference, but we'll get more information out on that in the February issue of the *Guardian*.

Also, keep an eye out in next month's issue for our scholarship program information.

I am also pleased to announce that Debbi Newton has been named chairman of two national committees by EANGUS (the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the U.S.). She will serve as chairman for the Publications Committee and the Public Relations Committee. Debbi has served as a member or co-chair on each of these committees in the past.

But with everything we are doing, we need your help. We need new members, we need volunteers for a variety of events and tasks, and we need a new Executive Director, a part-time position.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these, please contact any member of the board, call myself or Debbi, or call our office and leave a message. Our phone number is (860) 247-5000.



RONALD E. LEE, 1st SGT. (RET.) USAR
CT-ESGR PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN

It is hard to believe that another year has whisked by us and here we are in 2005. The Connecticut Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (CT-ESGR) was extremely busy throughout the past year and I would like to take this opportunity to recap some of our more significant events.

We began in January by hosting our annual three-day "Bosslift" to approximately forty employers from diversified areas of employment from all parts of the State. They flew on a

KC-135C Refueler out of the Bradley Connecticut Air Guard facility to San Diego, California where the guests toured the Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton, the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, the US Coast Guard Department of Homeland Security facility and the Navy yard which included a tour of an aircraft carrier and troop landing ship.

One of our guests, Robert Janicki, an employee of SBC, was surprised to find that the troop ship we toured was in fact the same one that he was on for a short time when he was a Marine in Viet Nam in 1968.

ESGR hard at work to gain & maintain employer support

CT-ESGR also conducted two one-day interstate "Bosslifts" where employers were flown from the State Veterans Home in Rocky Hill to Camp Rell aboard a CH-47B Chinook. At Camp Rell the attendees experienced "firearms training" with the National Guard's F.A.T.S. facility along with briefings, etc. to gain insight into some of the daily activities that their employers (who serve in the Guard or Reserve) might participate in.

Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, adjutant general, conducted a briefing for legislative attendees on the November "Bosslift" in order to brief them on the status of today's military, especially the Connecticut National Guard, and to solicit their support.

A "Bosslift" was conducted from Connecticut down to the US Coast Guard facility in New York City where guest toured the military facilities and got an amazing "up close and personal" look as NYC highlights such as the Statue of Liberty. The use of the Rocky Hill facilities as well as the ESGR Office at 196 West Street, Rocky Hill, is due to the fantastic support of Commissioner of Veterans Affairs Linda Schwartz. We couldn't do half of our work without her unselfish support.

Throughout the year, the ESGR Military Unit Liaison Team, under the direction of

Chairman Jack Robb, conducted USERRA briefings at units throughout the State to ensure that members of the Guard and Reserve were aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Just as important, members of ESGR, especially Tom Pandolfi, devoted countless hours to pre-mobilization and demobilization briefings and kept abreast of all deployments of service members from our State.

Our ombudsmen, under the guidance of chairman Tom Langlais, addressed issues and claims as they were received.

Luckily, the majority of employers in Connecticut are very supportive of their employees who have been called upon to serve and there have been relatively few problems.

August saw the three-day display of the ESGR-sponsored NASCAR racecar #29 at the Buick Championship in Cromwell and the Old State House in Hartford.

Hundreds of spectators viewed the car, signed to the banner in support of the troops and were introduced to ESGR and what we try to do to support the Guard and Reserve. Countless contacts were made with people

See ESGR Page 25

Inside OCS

Realizing what he'd learned, Soldier comes back to Guard, enters OCS

O.C. TYSHON D. GORHAM
OFFICER CANDIDATE CLASS 50

OCS for the members of Class 50 has been a culmination of many life experiences that brought us to the path and desire to lead. By attending and one day completing this course we will join a both Connecticut and national tradition that has produced some of the finest leaders the United States Army has to offer.

This tradition is one of the motivating factors that help me to “drive on” when faced to confront some of the rigors of Officer Candidate School (OCS).

In a course that is specifically designed to place stress on the officer candidate, I find that Class 50, through its strength and commitment, has what it takes to graduate together as a class.

In the month of November, Class 50 successfully passed a barracks inspection conducted by the Senior TAC Officer. This inspection evaluated Class 50 on our attention to detail as it relates to the proper maintenance of our barracks and wall-lockers.

Candidates were also inspected on the maintenance and upkeep of the army uniforms to the standards befitting an army officer.

This emphasis on looking like an officer is stressed on a daily basis and is part of Class 50’s ongoing learning experience. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr said, “Half of being an officer is looking like an officer.”

Before attending OCS I was a seven-year

enlisted Soldier in the Connecticut Army National Guard. When I enlisted in 1996 the mind- set for enlisting was quite different than the enlistee of today. America was not at war and most of my colleagues were in search of a practical means of paying for college. I on the other hand didn’t feel qualified, on an intellectual level, to attend any college or

I on the other hand didn't feel qualified, on an intellectual level, to attend any college or university so I enlisted seeking a means to obtain the necessary confidence for academic progression.

university so I enlisted seeking a means to obtain the necessary confidence for academic progression.

I believed that by embracing a difficult task I could reassess my goals and accurately gauge whether college was the correct path for me. It seemed only fitting that the infantry was my destination.

At Ft. Benning I was pushed to the limits to the likes I hadn’t seen until OCS. The day that I was awarded my infantry cord and graduated infantry school I knew that I was mentally ready to take on the task of attaining a college degree.

I approached college using the same skills

that I learned at Ft. Benning and four years later I obtained my bachelors degree in Social Work. Believing that the Connecticut Army National Guard had “served its purpose” in giving me the confidence that I needed, I decided not to reenlist and was honorable discharged in 2002.

Several months later while on my civilian job I began to reminisce about the many valuable things I learned and achieved as a result of my enlistment in the Connecticut Army National Guard. I remembered some of the great leaders whose care I was placed in and the way it felt to believe in their leadership abilities. I knew then that I had to get back into the Guard and go it 100 percent to reach my full potential. I knew that I had to be a leader to one day inspire Soldiers the way that I was inspired and provide them with the same leadership I was given.

I have seen first hand what good leadership does for the enlisted Soldier. It’s more to me than just theory and jargon that I have read in a leadership book. It has a face and many experiences to go along with it. This first hand experience of being lead by great leaders is what I bring to OCS and will bring as an Army Officer. Coupled with this experience I am fully confident that through the teaching, assessment and counseling of the highly experienced TAC staff at Officer Candidate School I will progress to be a fully capable officer in the coming year.

Leadership Regiment announces upcoming schools, courses

Basic Training Orientation/ Recruit Holding Company
Jan. 26-27

OCS Phase 2
Jan. 26-27

Basic NCO Course Phase 1
Jan. 26-27

Combat Lifesavers Course Recertification
March 19-20

Combat Lifesavers Course #2
April 23-24 & May 21-22

The Army Instructors Training Course
April 23-24, May 21-22 & June 4

TAC Qualification Course #2
May 16-20

Pre-PLDC
March 12-13

Fitness Leader Course
April 16

QRF
Jan. 21-23 & March 18-20

Why Diversity?

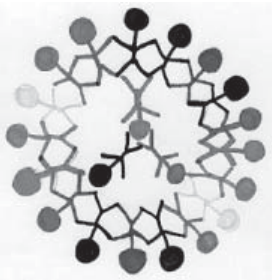
CTNG, USPS to host Black History Month Celebration

During these extraordinary times, America looks forward to new challenges and opportunities with a reinvigorated sense of unity and common purpose. We are a vibrant nation, thanks to the creativity, fortitude and resilience of people of every background. During National Black History Month, we celebrate the many achievements and contributions made by African Americans to our economic, cultural and political development. On Friday, Feb. 11 the Connecticut National Guard, in conjunction with the United States Postal Service, will host its 2005 Black History Celebration at the Hartford Civic Center, Exhibition Hall, Hartford Connecticut, from 9:00am – 11:00pm. This year’s theme is “The NAACP putting its stamp on History.” A presentation over viewing the historical contributions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) will be the Keynote of our program.

There will be the Dedication of the Marian Anderson Stamp by the United States Postal Service along with a special musical performance. Along with the presentation of awards for winners of the “Recognition of Connecticut Black Students in Academics” contest. Following the program students are encouraged to attend the “Harlem Book Fair” from 1100am-6:00pm. We encourage both military and civilian participation at this most interesting and educational event. To confirm your attendance at this event RSVP to Spc. Ivette Rosario at (860) 878-6721. The NAACP was founded On Feb. 12, 1909 by Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villiard and William English Walling, a multiracial group of activists, who answered “The Call.” They initially called themselves the National Negro Committee who led the “Call” to renew the struggle for civil and political liberty. The mission of the NAACP is to insure that the political, educational, social and economic

equality of minority groups and citizens achieves equality of rights and eliminates race prejudice among the citizens of the United States; it removes all barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic processes. The NAACP seeks to enact and enforce federal, state, and local laws securing civil rights. The organization informs the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination and seeks its elimination; educates persons as to their constitutional rights and to take all lawful action in furtherance of these principles. In celebration of reading and the importance of literacy in the African American community the Harlem Book Fair is premiering in Connecticut. The Harlem Book Fair is the country’s largest gathering of African American readers and book lovers, and provides daytime educational activities in conjunction with an evening of entertainment. Events include panel discussions featuring powerful writers, scholars, and top business leaders,

motivational speakers, poets, and storytellers. Book lovers will have the opportunity to mix and mingle with the authors of some of their favorite books. The NAACP will also be having an Equal Opportunity Awards Luncheon at the Crowne Plaza Hotel from 12:00 pm – 2:00 pm honoring Richard Weaver-Bey with the W.E.B. Dubois Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the Civil Rights Movement in Connecticut and his business accomplishments. The NAACP will end the evening with a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the grand opening of Connecticut State Conference Office. This event will take place at the New State Office in Hartford.



Health & Fitness



Medical Notes

COL. FRANK T. DiNUCCI
BSN, COHN-S

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), "Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that is found in the all cells of the body." Cholesterol serves a role vital in the formation of cell membranes and certain vitamins and hormones. Cholesterol travels throughout the body via the bloodstream, however since Cholesterol is a Lipid (fat) and the blood is a watery substance, Cholesterol cannot travel throughout the blood stream without help. A protein provides this help. The combination of the protein and cholesterol is called lipoprotein.

When you have a blood test for cholesterol your health care provider will most likely order a complete lipid panel this would include, total cholesterol (TC), low-density lipoprotein (LDL), high-density lipoprotein (HDL), and triglyceride. Listed below is a brief description of each:

Total Cholesterol (TC) - The TC is the sum of the HDL and LDL. Cholesterol levels are measured in milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL) of blood. According to the NIH the recommended TC is less than 200 mg/dL, any level from 200-239 mg/dL is borderline high, and levels greater than 240 mg/dL are considered high and often referred to as hyperlipidemia or Hypercholesterolemia.

Low Densities Lipoprotein (LDL) - LDL is also referred to as the bad cholesterol and

make up about two thirds of the cholesterol in the bloodstream. LDL is a major contributor in the formation of plaque in blood vessel walls leading to decrease blood flow and blockage. An LDL is less than 100 mg/dL is ideal, 100-129 mg/dL is considered near ideal, 130-159 mg/dL borderline high, 160-189 mg/dL is considered high, and anything 190 mg/dL is considered very high.

High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) - HDL is considered the good cholesterol, HDL carries cholesterol from the bloodstream to the liver where it is broken down and passed out of the body, the higher level of HDL the better. Levels less than 40 mg/dL increases the risk of heart disease, levels 40-59 mg/dL decreases the level of heart disease, any levels higher than 60 mg/dL are considered protection against heart disease.

Triglycerides - Is another type of fat in the bloodstream. Levels less than 150 mg/dL is normal, levels 150- 199 mg/dL is considered borderline high, levels 200-499 mg/dL is considered high, and any levels over 500 mg/dL is considered extremely high.

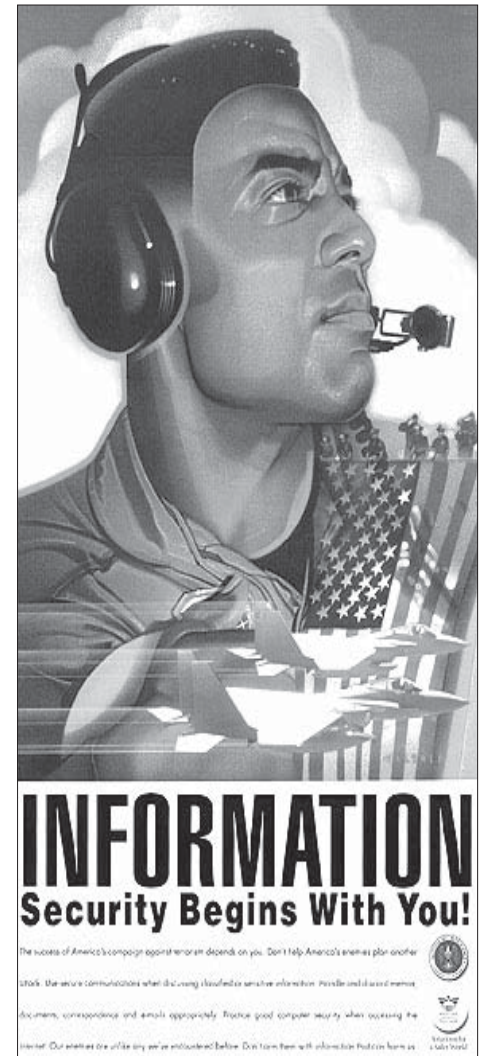
Another method for measuring risk factors, is the comparing the ratio of the Total Cholesterol (TC) levels to the High Density Lipoprotein Levels (HDL). To obtain this ratio you divide the TC by the HDL. For example, if a person TC were 220 mg/dL and the HDL cholesterol 55 mg/dL, the ratio would be stated as 4:1. Any ratio below 5:1 is within acceptable limits and ratio 3.5:1 is ideal.

Cholesterol *The silent killer*

There are a number of risk factors that can cause an increase your chances for heart disease. Listed below are some of the factors:

1. Genetic disorders- this one area you cannot change, but being aware of your family history and your present conditions can help you avoid possible pit falls.
2. Physical Activity- helps to increase HDL Levels, decreases body weight, and blood pressure.
3. Cigarette smoking- decreases HDL levels and increases the risk for blood clotting.
4. Overweight- decreases HDL levels, puts more stress on the body.
5. Excessive alcohol use- any more than 1-2 drinks per day can lead to overweight, high blood pressure, and alcoholism.
6. Very high carbohydrate diet- can lead up increase body weight.
7. Certain diseases and drugs- a number of diseases or drugs can compromise circulation or inhibit maintaining a proper balance within the body.

This article just covered the basics of understanding Cholesterol, you can find more information on the following web sites: National Institute of Health <http://www.nih.gov/>, and/or American Heart Association <http://www.americanheart.org>.



Fit for Life: Air Guard fitness tests show 'age'

STAFF SGT. CAROLYN A. ASELTON
103rd FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCOIC

The last of the 103rd Fighter Wing members to complete their 2004 fitness tests did so during the December training assembly at the Bradley Air National Guard Base in East Granby..

They used Air National Guard fitness tests implemented in 2003, which assess the five components of fitness: body composition (or body fat), cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility. Incorporated in the assessment are standards for the weight management program.

Maj. Shirley Y. Samy, clinical nurse, 103rd Medical Squadron, said during her Physical Well Being Briefing that physical fitness levels impact quality of life.

She referenced Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John J. Jumper who said, in 2003, that the Air Force's level of fitness needs improvement and introduced the new tests.

"Being overweight and out of shape are risk factors for health problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high

cholesterol and triglycerides, arthritis, gall bladder disease, some cancers and even lung problems," Samy said. "It interferes with your quality of life."

Every unit member is required to fitness test annually, unless medically disqualified.

To complete the fitness tests, fitness monitors weighed the Airmen and measured their height, conducted a 3-minute step test, 60-second maximum push-up and sit-up tests, a sit-and-reach test, and, for some, a 1.5-mile run.

From there, monitors entered the individual's test data into the Air National Guard Web site, www.angfitness.com, and a program calculated fitness scores, fitness levels and a fitness age. The fitness age tells a member he has "the fitness level of an average person that age." When complete, the program sent an email with their results to the Airmen.

"As members of the military, it's our responsibility to upkeep our fitness standards," said Tech. Sgt. Aaron F. Hann, precision-guided munitions element, 103rd Maintenance Squadron. "Any one of us

could find ourselves in a combat situation where being fit would save our lives."

Prior to testing, members must complete a health and fitness questionnaire to determine potential health problems and any risk, and whether they will run or step. "Everyone should run," Hann said. "There's a reason why we have to be fit."

Airmen who receive a marginal or poor score must retest and pass in six months.

Members can access their assessments on the fitness Web site. There they will also find information regarding exercise,

nutrition and supplements, as well as links to other helpful Web sites.

To improve, Samy recommends people focus on dietary and exercise changes rather than weight loss and setting realistic, specific, achievable goals.

Setting a goal to exercise more is commendable, she said, but not specific enough.

"How about walk thirty minutes five days a week? It's specific, achievable and when you're first starting out, it's flexible enough," she said.



2nd Lt. Douglas P. Scheirey (doing sit-up), personnel officer, 103rd Mission Support Flight, shows correct form as he performs as many sit-ups in 60 seconds as possible during his fitness test in the Bradley ANG base main hangar. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Carolyn A. Aseltan, 103rd FW)

Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3) operational

CTNG J1 RELEASE

The Adjutant General, Connecticut Army National Guard, has directed that all levels of the Chain of Command are informed of the Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3).

Immediate actions for all units are to ensure that all Soldiers and family members are aware of the program. When Soldiers are injured in combat, they will know that the Army will honor their commitment by ensuring their physical, mental, and financial needs are understood and addressed.

The DS3 Program provides each Soldier seriously injured during combat operations in the Global War on Terrorism and his/her family with a personal DFS3 Advocate, called a Soldier/Family Management Specialist.

This DS3 Advocate will help the soldier understand the numerous programs designed to support him/her and will help the Soldier complete the administrative requirements to receive the support he/she deserves.

The DS3 Advocate will also help the Soldier to make informed career decisions about continuing on active duty or obtaining government or civilian employment. Some of the organizations that the DS3 Soldier/Family Management Specialist will assist the Soldier in contacting include the Department of Veterans Affairs, the

Department of Labor, and numerous Veterans service organizations and foundations that stand ready to help.

Eligibility: When a Soldier receives a disability rating of 30 percent or greater and a special category designation, the Soldier is designated DS3.

Special category designation includes loss of sight or limb, permanent and unsightly disfigurement of a portion of the body normally exposed to view, incurable or fatal diseases, an established psychiatric condition, or paralysis.

The DS3 staff will then contact the Soldier to explain the program and offer the personal assistance discussed above. Soldiers will continue to receive support for five years after they leave active duty.

For more information on DS3, visit the DS3 web site at www.armyds3.org or e-mail the DS3 staff at:

armyds3@hoffman.army.mil or contact the DS3 call center at CTDP-MPO

SUBJECT: Disabled Soldier Support System (DS3) or 1 (800) 833-6622 between 0800-1630 (EST) from Monday through Friday.

The Connecticut Army National Guard point of contact is Col. William Sobota at (860) 524-4820 or via e-mail at william.sobota@ct.ngb.army.mil.

ESGR

From Page 22

vowing their support of our troops.

ESGR volunteers devoted hundreds of hours to attend numerous Chamber of Commerce events, trade shows, fairs and the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities Expo as a part of our Employer Outreach Program in an effort to educate employers regarding their employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve and to try to gain their support.

Many hours were devoted by ESGR members, especially Michael Dury, Senior Vice President and CFO of The Hartford property and Casualty Operations in developing Connecticut's Employer Outreach Strategic Plan while Wayne Travers prepared an outstanding Media Outreach Plan.

Mike, who served with the Army in Vietnam, was pictured on a special "Hire Vets First" promotional cover wrap of November 15, 2004 Business Week magazine which included an article highlighting the value of veterans.

Also recognized in this issue for outstanding and dedicated efforts supporting our Citizen Soldiers and the Veterans were Robert Nardelli, Chairman, President and CEO, Home Depot; Robert Lutz, Vice Chairman, General Motors; and Jackson Moore, President and CEO, Regions Financial Corporation.

In closing, it is always dangerous to try to recognize things that were done and the people who did them as some event or person is always left out.

This is not intentional and hopefully no one will be offended if they are not specifically recognized.


Each member who devotes their time and effort towards assisting ESGR in supporting our troops is a valuable asset.

The only limitation to reflecting on the ESGR events of the past year is the limited space available for this column.

If there is anything of specific interest to you that you would like to see in this space please contact an ESGR member at our Rocky Hill office by calling (860) 21-5903 or by e-mail to CTESGRLEW@cox.net. Until next time, be happy, be healthy and be safe!




MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS



Honoring Those Who Served

The rendering of Military Funeral Honors is a way to show the Nation's deep gratitude to those, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our country. This ceremonial paying of respect is the final demonstration a grateful nation can provide to veteran's family.



Opportunities are available for all Guardsmen to further serve our great country by joining the teams that are providing the final tribute on behalf of our grateful Nation. In addition, receive a day of pay by performing Active Duty Special Work (ADSW) and also earn a full retirement point.

CONTACT
 CSM Daniel G. Norkun Jr.
 (860) 493-2718
 or
 SFC Bertrand Saur
 (860) 493-2773

**For
deployment-
related
questions
call
1-800-858-2677**



Visit the

**Connecticut
Guardian**

on-line at

www.ct.ngb.army.mil



Retirees' Voice

Gray Area retirees should understand, take advantage of TRICARE Dental

SGT. 1ST CLASS (RET.) JOHN BEDNARZ

I was sent an article from TRICARE Headquarters, that appeared in the *Navy Compass*, having to do with the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP). It seems that many retired Reserve and Guard members, and even more "Gray Area" retirees, do not realize that from its inception, they and their families have been, and are, eligible for TRDP.

Premiums for TRDP are regionally based on the retiree's ZIP code. Title 10, U. S. Code mandates that the monthly premiums will be deducted automatically, by using one of the allowed discretionary allotments from retired pay.

However "Gray Area" retirees not yet receiving retired pay can make alternative payment arrangements such as direct billing or Electronic Funds Transfer.

Thousands are enjoying the benefits of TRDP. Enrollees can choose any licensed dentist within the service area. Anyone who would like more information can visit www.trdp.org or call Delta Dental of California, at (888) 838-8737 for an enrollment package.

Paychecks were increased for some military retirees who at the 1992-93 SBP open enrollment, signed up for Supplemental SBP (SSBP). Retirees who took the SSBP coverage at that time and those retiring later who elected the coverage have been paying higher premiums than those who opted for regular SBP. Beginning with the 92-93 open season you could ensure that your annuity would remain at 55 percent, or a lesser annuity (in 5 percent increments), down to

40 percent with a variable SBP cost.

The selected level of coverage will continue without you paying the SSBP premiums. Starting Nov. 1 the deductions for SSBP were stopped and your December pay was increased by the amount previously deducted for SSBP less income tax withholding.

It's always disturbing to hear of an old friend or colleague passing away. But there has been a disturbing trend lately of the deaths of some fairly young men who have retired from the National Guard.

The recent deaths of retirees Col. Paluel Flagg, Sgt. Maj. John Wilk, Sgt. 1st Class William Hugo, Sgt. 1st Class John Gilmartin, and Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Lacy have thrown me for a loop. These men have been a pleasure to serve with and have helped to make my experiences in the Guard pleasurable.

I'm sure there are others in the Army and Air Guard who I didn't know that well, but it's equally as sad to see them go. God bless them for their Honorable and Faithful service and deepest condolences to their families and friends.

If you hear of the death of a Guardsman and aren't sure that a Black Border bulletin has been issued by the National Guard please check with Master Sgt. Hope Busher at J1, by calling (860) 524-4814 or e-mail her at hope.busher@ct.ngb.army.mil. Be ready to give her as many details as you can in regard to the planned services.

If you have any comments or suggestions for me, or this column, my e-mail is jackbedz@cttel.net.

CNGRoF to hold reunion

The Connecticut National Guard Retirees of Florida will hold its annual reunion in Orlando Florida on Friday and Saturday, March 4 - 5, 2005. This will be the association's 20th reunion. All former and retired Connecticut National Guardsmen (Army or Air) are welcomed to attend. For more information please contact CWO (Ret) Arthur Finnegan, telephone (727) 725-7206; or CSM (Ret) Aksel Hansen, telephone (352) 686-1628.

HANDYPERSON HOTLINE

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2nd Louie

By Bob Rosenburgh



Connecticut National Guard Fulltime Employment Opportunities

The following are Connecticut Army and Air National Guard Technician openings. For a copy of the full Technician vacancy announcements, go to www.ct.ngb.army.mil and click on employment opportunities.

Army National Guard Technician Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Pay Grade	Closing Date
Aircraft Mechanic (12 vacancies)	AASF	WG-12	Dec. 29, 2004
Administrative Assistant	JFHQ-CT	GS-07	Jan. 3, 2005
Supply Technician (Indef.)	USPFO	GS-07	Jan. 13, 2005
Supply Technician (Indef.)	DCSIM	GS-05	Jan. 17, 2005

Air National Guard Technician Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Pay Grade	Closing Date
Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic	103rd FW	WG-10	Jan. 3, 2005
Powered Support Systems Mechanic	103rd FW	WG-10	Jan. 3, 2005
Aircraft Electrician	103rd FW	WG-10	Jan. 7, 2005
Aircraft Pneudraulic Systems Mechanic	103rd FW	WG-10	Jan. 7, 2005
Materials Handler	103rd FW	WG-06	Jan. 6, 2005
Aircraft Electrician	103rd FW	WG-11	Jan. 7, 2005
Airplane Flight Instructor (2 vacancies)	103rd FW	GS-13	Jan. 17, 2005
Secretary	103rd ACS	GS-05	Jan. 19, 2005
Support Services Assistant	103rd ACS	GS-05	Jan. 19, 2005

Listed below are current openings in the Connecticut National Guard AGR program. For a copy of the Military Tour Vacancy Announcement, go the www.ct.ngb.army.mil and click on employment opportunities.

Army National Guard AGR Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Rank	Area of Consideration
Production Recruiter	RRC	SFC/E-7	Open AGR Nationwide
Unit Supply Sergeant	712th Maint. Co.	Up to E-6	Open AGR Nationwide
Training Specialist	HQ 169th Regt. (LDR)	O-1 to O-3	Open AGR Statewide Only
Unit Supply Sergeant	c/1-102nd INF Bn.	Up to E-6	Open AGR Nationwide

Air National Guard AGR Vacancies			
Position Title	Unit	Rank	Area of Consideration
Aircraft Electrician	103rd FW	Up to E-6	On Board AGR Only
Aircraft Pneud. Syst. Mechanic	103rd FW	Up to E-6	On Board AGR Only
Aircraft Electrician	103rd FW	E-7 or Below	Open AGR Nationwide

NOTE: Other positions with outdated closing dates are also listed on the website. Some of these positions are currently under consideration, and others may have their application dates extended. Keep checking the website and if you have any questions concerning outdated postings, call HRO at (860) 878-6739 or (860) 878-6729.

Temporary Technician Employment Opportunities

The Human Resource Office has Temporary Technician employment opportunities available throughout the State. We have a need for a variety of military specialties including Family Support Specialists, Administrative Support Personnel, Aircraft Mechanics, Finance Specialists,

Heavy Equipment Mechanics and Operators, etc.

If you are a member of the Connecticut National Guard and are interested in one of these employment opportunities, please call the HRO Staffing Specialist at (860) 878-6739 or just submit an OF-612 and OF-306 directly to the HRO.

If sending your application directly please ensure you sign and date both forms, document all your civilian and military experience, list your daytime phone number and identify the type of Temporary Technician position you would be interested in filling.

Coming Events

January

January 1

New Year's Day

January 5

2005 Connecticut Legislative Session Opens

January 6

NGACT Legislative Breakfast

January 17

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 18

NGACT Retiree Luncheon

January 20

Presidential Inauguration

February

February 11

Black History Month Celebration

February 12

Lincoln's Birthday

February 14

Valentine's Day

February 21

President's Day

February 22

Washington's Birthday

March

March 6-9

EANGUS Legislative Workshop

March 11

2nd Company Governor's Foot Guard Dance

Benefit National Guard Foundation of Connecticut

March 17

St. Patrick's Day

March 18

EANGUS Area 1 Caucus

March 19

NGACT Annual Conference

Camp Rell

March 20

Palm Sunday

In future issues

Presidential Inauguration

Helmets to Hardhats

When Dating Ends & Stalking Begins

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month previous to publication.



Balad, IRAQ - Members of HHD 118th Medical Battalion (Area Support) show their support for the Army on the eve of the Army-Navy Game. Members present are (L to R): Maj. Michael Talley, Spc. Georges Rene, Sgt. Daniel Lynch, Maj. Valerie Smith, Staff Sgt. Durward Travis, Sgt. Paul Tarbox, Spc. Alan Sullivan, Sgt. Joseph Phaneuf, Spc. Sergio Mills, Spc. Sara Delano and Sgt. 1st Class Mark Chambers. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class William Appleby, 118th Med.)

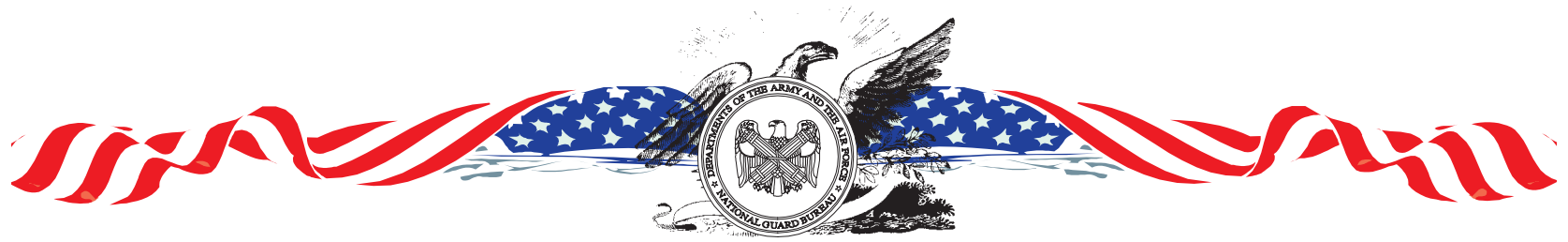
(Photo to right)
Lt. Col. Alberto Higuera, 143rd ASG, strikes a holiday pose while serving in Baghdad. (Photo courtesy of Mary Boylan, spouse of Higuera)



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld surprised U.S. troops stationed in Baghdad by visiting with them for Christmas. Among those able to meet Rumsfeld were several members of Connecticut's 143rd Area Support Group. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Chris Pelletier, 143rd ASG)

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Family Deployment Supplement to the Connecticut Guardian

VOL. 6 NO. 1

HARTFORD, CT

JANUARY 2005

Governor, TAG celebrate Christmas with the families of deployed Soldiers

PFC. JOSEPH BROOKS
65TH PCH

T'was a week before
Christmas and all through
the Guard,
Some of the families had it quite
hard.
Their stockings were still hung with
just the same care,
But unfortunately their loved ones
could not be there.
They had family fighting a war far
away,
And would not be home on
Christmas Day.
Then all through the state there
arose a commotion;
The National Guard Family
Program came up with a notion.
With the help of the Governor and
through Operation E.L.F.;
They gave back to the families that
give of themselves.

Operation E.L.F. culminated on December 19 with a Christmas party for the families of the Connecticut National Guard members who are currently deployed. Bruce Maneeley, the owner and proprietor of Maneeley's Banquette Facility in South Windsor, donated the use of his dinning hall and all of the food for the event. More than 300 families of deployed Guard members attended the event.

Maneeley's staff served a breakfast buffet for the attendees while Christmas carols played in the back ground.

The event was filled with surprises as three special guests made appearances to show their support to the families. Maj. General William A. Cugno arrived at the event to greet the families and to do a special reading of "T'was the Night Before Christmas" for the children.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell was on hand to celebrate the holidays with the families. Rell began working with the Connecticut National Guard Foundation, and last year created Operation E.L.F. and said she plans to carry it through for as long as it is needed.

"These people, the family members, are

the ones who need to be appreciated," said Rell. "They have to carry out the same work and maintain the same household as before but with one less adult. For me personally it's a way to say thank you."

However the biggest and most anticipated guest was Santa. He made a special appearance, a week early to reward the good boys and girls.

Each child in attendance at the Christmas party received a package of toys that had been donated to Operation E.L.F. Each child under 15 received a wrapped gift package that contained six toys appropriate to their age group. Approximately 1,000 toys were given out to the children.

This was the second Operation E.L.F. Christmas party for Andrea Travis. Her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Durward Travis, deployed with the 118th Medical Battalion and has been away from home since before last Christmas.

"It keeps your mind off the fact that you are missing a big part of your family, especially this time of the year. It's just unbelievable, the outcry of support and affection from people," said Andrea Travis.



Santa made a special appearance to deliver toys to children of deployed Soldiers. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)



Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno shares a lighthearted moment with several of the children of deployed Soldiers during the Maneeley's Holiday Party. (Photo by Spc. Jordan Werme, 65th PCH)



Gov. M. Jodi Rell took time to encourage one child during the Holiday Party. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Markowski, 65th PCH)



CATHERINE GALASSO

You are not alone Soldier...

If your spiritual eyes could be opened you would see that there are angels among us. They are about seven-foot tall, mighty and strong angels and they walk with us wherever we go to guard us at home, in war and in peace. They protect us, one on each side of our being guarding us with their fiery swords drawn, just like the great warriors that they are.

There were many incidences of angels seen in the battle during World War 1 and 11. We do not see angels all the time because our walk here on Earth is to be a walk of faith. With that strong faith we can conquer all obstacles and know we have angels to help us. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1.

An elderly reader wrote, "My husband and I were trying to clean our driveway of snow. Some big fellow in a red pick up truck with a snow blade started at the street where the snowplow had pushed about four feet of snow across our property and blocked our driveway. The stranger put his snow blade against that bank of snow and just kept on until he had our whole driveway cleared. That dear man just gave us a wave and left. We didn't get to thank him but we prayed that God would bless him. I think he was an angel." I've heard that angels never wait around for thanks; they know all the glory goes to God. Soldiers, we are praying for you, we appreciate you so much.

Where love abounds angels hover overhead. With or without being seen they are present, directed by the Holy Spirit, a loving glow beside us, keeping us safe and warm.

Angels give us comfort, confidence and guidance according to God's direction. "For He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." Psalm 91:11.

Angels are ministers of grace sent by the Father. When we lift our voices in prayer and praises and song the room gets so

crowded. In the spiritual world, beams of God's light shine up into space, the angels see them, they come swiftly calling to each other to gather around and join in our praise.

I once read a story about a young man who, on a racing bike, started riding downward on a winding, steep mountain road. When he wanted to slow down, he tried to apply his brakes, they failed. Faster and faster the man sped out of control. On one side of him was a steep drop, on the other side, a solid rock. Frozen in fear, he prayed, "God, help me!" Suddenly, he felt immediately calm.

As he looked up he saw and heard about twenty angels flying along with him, calmly talking and laughing with each other. The angels were just joyously doing their job. The

next thing he knew was that he was safely stopped at the bottom of the hill. That young man's eyes were opened for a split second into the spiritual world,

because he lived such a life, knowing that God was always watching him.

In desperate times, some people are allowed a glimpse of the angels. However, day by day we can know in our hearts what our eyes can't see. You can't see love but you know when it's there, you can't see joy, but you feel it in your heart. Gravity has never been seen but we live in the effect of its law every day. It is the same thing with the presence of angels.

Music is said to be the speech of angels. And when I sing to my daughter about God's goodness, I can almost see the angels that are gathering around us and join in with us in singing His praises. In the softness of the evening, when I sing to her the lullaby's of God's love, she falls asleep with a smile on her sweet face and I think of the quote by Longfellow who wrote, "Silently one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven. Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of angels."

Soldiers, we send prayers and blessings out to you as you guard our freedom. We know it can be sniffed out in a moment, and so we pray for you, that you may know you are appreciated and not alone.

Write to Catherine Galasso-Vigorito, nationally syndicated columnist and author of "A New You, Words to Soothe the Body, Mind and Spirit," in care of Connecticut Guardian, 360 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06105-3795 or e-mail her at anewyou@snel.net © Catherine Galasso, 2004

WELCOME HOME COMMEMORATIVE T-SHIRTS HONORING THE 118TH MEDICAL BATTALION HQ COMPANY

The 118th Family Readiness Group invites you to participate in the following fundraiser:
Connecticut's Army National Guard 118th Medical Battalion HQ Company has been serving our Country in Balad, Iraq since February 2004.
To show our support we are selling commemorative T-shirts in the unit's honor. ALL proceeds will be going towards a welcome home celebration/reception to be held shortly after the Soldiers return to Connecticut.

The front of the shirt will bear the unit crest over the left chest along with the words:
"118th Medical Battalion"

The back of the shirt will have an American flag centered along with the words:
"Welcome Home 118th Medical Battalion"

Upon arriving in Connecticut, each Soldier will receive the same shirt with the addition of the words "Operation Iraqi Freedom II Veteran".
We appreciate your support in helping us achieve the funds needed to plan this memorable occasion.

Please detach and mail promptly no later than Jan. 2, 2005 to:
Gail D. Walker, P.O. Box 522, Rocky Hill, CT 06067
Check or Money Order to be made payable to:
"118th Medical Battalion FRG"

Shirts to be distributed on Jan. 29, 2004 at the New Britain Armory, 855 Stanley St., New Britain between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. unless other arrangements are made.
Please direct all questions to Gail Walker (860)563-0850.

Name _____
Phone # _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Size Requested:
(Youth) Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____
(Adult) Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ 1X _____ 2X _____ 3X _____
Total Number of Shirts _____ x \$12.00 = Amount Enclosed \$ _____



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Wounded veterans briefed on available services

SAMANTHA L. QUIGLEY
AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

Organizations that offer assistance to veterans aren't terribly helpful if veterans don't know they exist.

The Coalition to Salute America's Heroes: 1st Annual Road to Recovery Tribute and Conference for wounded veterans in Orlando aimed to fix that in an informational panel session Dec. 9. Eight representatives of organizations serving veterans each briefly described their specialties, which run the gamut from benefits counseling and help filing claims to assistance in finding jobs and making the workplace accommodations necessary to being successful in those jobs.

Some veterans said they were familiar with most of the benefits and services discussed, and others said they learned a lot. They had an opportunity to ask questions in person at booths set up at the back of the room after hearing the brief presentations.

William Boettcher, national commander of Amvets and a Marine Vietnam War veteran, said that the service officers of his and other veterans service organizations have one goal — to help veterans. "Both the national and state service officers our organizations employ have but one mission in life, and that's to make sure you receive your earned benefits," Boettcher told the group.

Service officers are well-versed in veterans benefits and trained to provide information to veterans and their families on disability compensation, job training and employment and education and home loans, among other benefits, Boettcher said. They also can assist in filing claims.

"Regardless of which veterans service organization you check in with, the important thing is to make the contact," Boettcher said.

Once separated from the military, employment can be a difficult for a veteran.

A disability can make it even harder, making a return to a previous career nearly impossible. Several avenues exist, however, to make it much easier.

The Defense Department is actively recruiting veterans, and has a section of a Web site specifically geared toward those with disabilities. "As a veteran of eight years, when I got out of the military, I was not aware of the vast array of resources and job opportunities to continue serving my country," said John Mosley, deputy director for program support in the Defense Civilian Personnel Management Service. His video presentation to the wounded veterans allayed any doubt about whether veterans can continue serving their country, citing more than 700 civilian positions available in DoD.

Another organization, Hire Vets First, links employers with veterans. The organization's goal as an entity of the President's Hire Veterans Committee is to convince employers that hiring veterans is good business. The coalition's own program "Hire Smart ... Bet on a Vet!" echoes this sentiment.

Organizations such as the Job Accommodation Network help employers accommodate employees with disabilities. DoD also has its Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program to help federal employees with disabilities do their jobs effectively.

Some organizations help with financial help. Army Emergency Relief, for example, is available to veterans, and like many service organizations, offers assistance from the time a soldier separates. Often, that assistance is extended to dependents, said retired Army Sgt. Maj. Dennis Scott, an AER assistant secretary.

He made it clear to conference attendees that his organization is not part of the Army. "That's a common mistake that many soldiers make," Scott said. The organization is a private, nonprofit corporation established by the in 1942.

"All of you know, of course, that you have eligibility as an active duty soldier," Scott told the group. "But I hope you also know that when you make the transition to retiree, you still have your eligibility. When you retire, as far as we are concerned, you are still a part of the Army family and you retain that eligibility."

He said AER can help soldiers and their families with financial crises. The help can come in the form of no-interest loans, grants or a combination. AER also can provide undergraduate-level education scholarships under certain circumstances, Scott said.

All organizations represented by the panelists, and several others, had information booths for veterans to visit. The Labor Department was conducting on-site job interviews throughout the conference. And the Department of Veterans Affairs representatives also were on hand to help explain benefits and procedures.

Army Spc. Chad Byrne said the information session was beneficial for him. "I got a lot out of it," he said. "(There are) a lot of things I didn't know were available. It's going to help tremendously." Byrne, an aspiring restaurant owner, said VA benefits, including the education benefit, will be especially helpful for him.

Byrne was injured twice in the war on terrorism. The first time was on Easter of 2003 by a rocket-propelled grenade. The most recent injury resulted in a compound leg fracture. He is awaiting medical discharge, but now has filled out the paperwork to get the ball rolling on his VA benefits, he said.

2005 Basic Allowances for Housing Rates announced

DoD Press Release

The Department of Defense released the 2005 Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates, continuing the department's initiative of reducing military members' out-of-pocket housing costs. In total, the planned increase in housing allowance funds for fiscal 2005 above the fiscal 2004 amount is about \$2.5 billion. The 2005 rates represent the final phase of the planned buy down in out-of-pocket housing expenses. Other components of the increase are geographic rate protection and housing cost inflation.

Out-of-pocket expense, the portion of the typical member's housing cost that the member is responsible for, has been reduced from 3.5 percent last year to zero this year. The 2005 rates represent the final phase in a series of steps taken to bring the average member's out-of-pocket expense to zero by 2005.

However, the actual expense for an individual may be higher or lower than that average, based on his/her actual choice of housing.

Three components are included in the BAH computation:

- Median current market rent
- Average utilities (including electricity, heat, and water/sewer)
- Average renter's insurance

Total housing costs are calculated for six housing profiles (based on dwelling type and number of bedrooms) in each Military Housing Area (MHA). BAH rates are then calculated for each pay grade, both with and without dependents. An estimated \$12.3 billion will be paid to more than 910,000 service members in 2005.

Data are collected annually for approximately 400 MHAs in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. An important part of the BAH process is the cooperation from the services and local military housing offices in the data collection effort. Input from local commands is used to determine in what neighborhoods data is collected and to direct the data collection effort towards adequate apartment complexes and individual housing units.

For members with dependents, average increases in the BAH are approximately 8 percent. A typical E-4 with dependents, for example, will find his/her BAH about \$47 per month higher than last year. An E-8 with dependents will have about \$60 more in his/her paycheck.

An integral part of the BAH program is the provision of individual rate protection to all members. No matter what happens to measured housing costs, an individual member in a given location will never see his/her BAH rate decrease.

This policy assures that members who have made long-term commitments in the form of a lease or contract will not be penalized if the area's housing costs decrease.

Geographic rate protection has also been provided to members. Geographic rate protection maintains a BAH rate at last year's level while the planned buy down in out-of-pocket expense is phased in. Geographic rate protection means that newly arrived members to an area will not see BAH rates that are substantially less than current members' rates.

The continual improvement in housing allowances represent the Defense Department's commitment to the preservation of a compensation and benefit structure which will provide members with a suitable and secure standard of living, that will sustain a trained, experienced, and ready force in the future.



Army Sgt. Michael Cain has his prosthesis autographed by Ohio Valley Wrestling World Heavyweight Champion and World Tag Team Champion Deacon Batista during a luncheon in the Pentagon on Feb. 13, 2004. (DoD photo by Helene C. Stikkel)

Family Assistance Centers are set-up in the following armories around the state:

Any family member or loved one of a deployed soldier who has questions about benefits or deployment issues may also get answers to their question at the following email address:
kim.hoffman@ct.ngb.army.mil



A MONTHLY FEATURE OF FUN AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES